

JAZZ PIANO FUNDAMENTALS

BOOK 1: MONTHS 1-6

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the beginning of your jazz piano journey!

Pursuing jazz piano is uniquely rewarding and uniquely frustrating. On one hand, jazz pianists have an incredible freedom of expression and the ability to play either alone or with a group. Jazz harmony is incredibly colorful, jazz rhythm is vibrant and diverse, and improvisation is an immediate and powerful means of self-expression. However, at the same time, jazz piano is difficult! It requires excellent technique, a mastery of harmony, intricate coordination between the hands, encyclopedic historical and theoretical knowledge, a great ear, and a passion for communication.

Some say, “Jazz can’t be learned.” I disagree. I’m not a blind optimist. I have taught hundreds of students at all levels. Some students have gone on to successful careers and meaningful self-expression and some have given up after just a few weeks of study.

Here is what you need to know: learning jazz is very much like learning a language. No amount of studying can make you fluent in French, Hindi, or Chinese in a week or even a month. It takes years of immersion to learn a language. Jazz is similar.

To make matters even more interesting, the best jazz musicians are like poets, creating new words and turns of phrase, remaking simple grammar and vocabulary into something beautiful and surprising.

Of course, my dream for you is that you become a great poet of the language of jazz. But before you try to improvise poetry in this new language, you absolutely need to master the grammar, the vocabulary, the pronunciation, and the accent.

This book teaches you from many angles, just like you’d learn to speak a language:

- **Rote Exercises** like **Licks**, **ii-V-I Exercises**, and **Coordination Exercises** mirror the practice of learning “set phrases” in a language. Jazz musicians actually call these elements part of our jazz “vocabulary.” These are perfect opportunities to build muscle memory, hone jazz style, practice two-handed coordination, and get used to the feel of jazz phrases in your hands.
- **Controlled Improvisation Exercises** in each chapter are like conversational prompts or repetitive grammatical structures. These timed exercises get you improvising with a specific focus, both teaching you to achieve “flow” while improvising and forming good habits through shifting your focus.
- **Written Exercises** reinforce and test your understanding of elements of musical “grammar,” guaranteeing that you intellectually understand all the concepts presented.
- **Practicing Tunes** is like writing extended essays or having full conversations. While practicing tunes, you apply the skills you have learned in dry exercises and start making music, even if it is still a work in progress.
- **Guided Listening Assignments** immerse you into the world of a native speaker, like watching television or listening to podcasts in a foreign language. Spending time with listening assignments helps you to pick up the style, recognize common gestures in the music, and gain meaningful perspective about the history of the music.

The bad news: just like learning a language, learning jazz can't be achieved through any quick fix. Think of this book as your first semester of language learning. By the time you finish this book, you should know enough to successfully play in a small jazz combo. However, while these twelve units cover a *lot* of ground, you will find you still have a great deal to learn. Unfortunately, twelve units does not give us enough time to explore minor chord harmony, modal jazz, or solo piano playing.

The good news: many of you are coming into this study with excellent technical skills. You might be a very skilled pianist, you might already have a good ear, or you might have listened to a lot of jazz. Your preexisting skills will give you a leg up to learn this language quickly!

USING THIS BOOK

Each unit in this book is designed to be studied and practiced for about two weeks. At this rate, you would complete the book in six months. Of course, there is no such thing as “one size fits all.” Some students might be able to practice only a few hours a week whereas others might be able to spend hours every day immersing themselves in practice. Some learn faster and some learn slower. Consider about thirty hours of practice (about two hours per day) as being a good benchmark for how much time you should spend on each unit.



Scan Here
for Test

Each chapter has QR Codes that link to instructional videos and correct answers to written exercises. If you’ve never scanned a QR code, for most phones, the process is as easy as opening your camera and centering the QR code on the screen. You can practice with this QR code, which will send you to a welcome page for the book.

If you prefer to access the supplementary materials from a home page rather than from the QR codes, bookmark the following page, which has links to each unit page:

<https://jeremysiskind.com/jazz-piano-fundamentals-main-page/>



Scan Here
for Real Book

Use this book alongside a **Sixth Edition Real Book** (paper or eBook editions are both fine). Depending on the format, the book costs about \$20 or \$30. *The Real Book* is a collection of lead sheets that most every jazz musician owns at some point in their career. Each unit, at least one of your assignments will be to practice tunes from *The Real Book* while applying specific concepts from that chapter. This QR code takes you to a link to buy the book from Amazon (although please consider buying from your local music store).

Although I’m personally fascinated by solo jazz piano playing (full disclosure: I have written a nearly-two-hundred-page book called *Playing Solo Jazz Piano* on the subject), it makes more sense to start your jazz journey learning how to play in a band. There are three main reasons. First, playing in an ensemble is easier than playing solo. Second, learning is more fun and social with others. Third, many opportunities for newer musicians come in the form of ensembles. To simulate the experience of playing with a band, the text will frequently suggest that you practice with a play-along. A **play-along** is a recording of bass, drums, and sometimes piano created for practice purposes. Play-alongs are fantastic educational tools because they force you to play with a steady beat, prepare you to play with a band, and allow you to hear the harmonic context provided by the bass.



Scan Here
for iRealPro

There are a number of places you can find play-alongs. For free play-alongs, search the name of the piece plus the words “backing track” on YouTube.com. You will likely find a couple of different play-along options for most of the pieces in *The Real Book*. For about \$15, you can own the gold standard for play-alongs, the **iRealPro app**. The iRealPro app has thousands of tunes and allows the user to adjust the tempo, style, and key. Search for the iRealPro app wherever you download apps or scan the QR code to visit the iRealPro webpage.



Scan Here
for Lessons

Although lots of frequently asked questions are included in the text, there is no way to anticipate every question that might arise. In an ideal world, you will work through this book with a teacher, receiving at least one lesson per unit. A teacher can help you to correct course if you have misunderstood a concept, give you feedback on your style and articulation, suggest when you might need to slow down or speed up your curriculum, and guide you to further resources. I offer lessons at a special rate for students who have purchased this book. Scan the QR code and use the code “JPFUNDA2021” to schedule a lesson with a \$10 discount.



Scan Here for
Listening Playlists

Each unit ends with a Guided Listening section. I have created Spotify, Apple Music, and YouTube playlists with all of the Guided Listening tracks together. Feel free to listen on your preferred music platform.

TUNE BANK

This is your **Tune Bank**. These are tunes from *The Real Book* that you should focus on throughout your studies with this book. Tune Bank tunes were selected because they focus primarily on the harmonic progressions covered in this book.

Alright, Okay, You Win

Afternoon in Paris

All the Things You Are

Always

Blue Room

Broadway

Central Park West

Dancing on the Ceiling

Days and Night of Waiting

Easter Parade

Four

Giant Steps

Groovin' High

Half Nelson

Here's that Rainy Day

I Could Write a Book

Lady Bird

Misty

Mood Indigo

Never Will I Marry

Nostalgia in Times Square

Recorda-Me

Satin Doll

So Nice (Summer Samba)

Sophisticated Lady

Stompin' at the Savoy

The Surrey with the Fringe on Top

Take Five

There'll Be Some Changes Made

Time Remembered

Topsy

Tune Up

Well You Needn't

West Coast Blues

Wives and Lovers

PRINCIPLES FOR LEARNING JAZZ

Below, you will find important principles for learning jazz. Please take the time to consider each of these principles and review them every so often throughout the learning process.

1. Learn Rules, Then Break Them

I know, I know, jazz is supposed to be something you “feel.” Thelonious Monk breaks all the rules, so why shouldn’t you?

The answer to that question is that without structure, you are not going to learn much. There will be plenty of time to break rules down the road, but you have to really master the rules to even know how you might break them effectively.

If we return to the language metaphor from the introduction, the rules are the grammar of a language. Poets, rappers, playwrights, and novelists must all know how to speak the language fluently before they create their own variations.

2. Make a Mess, Then Clean It Up

I hate to say it, but your playing is probably not going to sound amazing very often during these first six months. But please don’t let that stop you from playing! *Please* go make a great big mess at the piano as you pursue jazz and improvisation and as time goes on, with the help of this book, fellow musicians, and maybe a teacher, you will learn how to tidy it up. But if you wait until everything comes out perfectly, you will never get started.

3. Ask “What If” Questions

While there is a great deal of information stuffed into these pages, limiting yourself to only what is in the book is going to be, well, limiting. To get beyond the information given, every time you learn something new, ask yourself as many “what if” questions as you can think of, and pursue each of them. Does a certain phrase sound good on dominant chords? Great! “What if” you tried it on a major chord? Does it sound good to add the thirteenth above your chord? Great! “What if” you tried adding the eleventh too? Does a lick sound really good as eighth notes? Great! “What if” you tried it with triplets or sixteenth notes? Great students never simply stop at the information being presented.

4. If It Sounds Good, It Is Good

How do you know whether these “what if” scenarios are working? If it sounds good, it is good! While you should trust your teacher, the rules presented in this text, and the guided listening examples to hone your ear and educate yourself about the jazz style, you also have to trust your ears. Not only will it help you to sort through successful and unsuccessful “what if” questions, but it will also help you develop a unique sound as an artist, a sound that is based on the sounds that *you* like.

5. Practice Succeeding...

Ultimately, you want each element of your practice session to stretch your abilities but not to overwhelm you. If practicing is the process of building habits, practicing poor execution will build the habit of poor execution. Modify overwhelming activities until you can execute them successfully, building a habit of success. The three ways to modify an exercise in piano practice are:

- a. Shorten – Work on a smaller amount of music at a time. Instead of trying to tackle eight measures, tackle two measures. Instead of trying to play a whole piece, just play the first line of music.
- b. Slow Down – Find the tempo at which you can play the exercise successfully, then raise the tempo up gradually to your goal.
- c. Simplify – Change or simplify the exercise. Play just one hand at a time instead of playing hands together. If the exercise is supposed to be done in all twelve keys, practice just two keys for now. Disregard the articulation until you master the notes.

6. ...or Push Yourself

If material is too easy, ask yourself “What If” questions to make the exercises stretch you a bit more. The three suggestions below will provide you with ideas to challenge yourself and allow you to move forward at a more rapid pace in your study of jazz.

- a. Add Pieces or Keys – If you can successfully play an exercise over one piece or key, choose more tunes from the tune bank or practice until you have mastered it in all twelve keys. If you can do it in all major keys, try some minor keys too.
- b. Accelerate – Bump up the tempo until you are going blazing fast!
- c. Add Elements – Add a left-hand pattern or right-hand phrase, add ornaments, try with a faster subdivision of meter, practice over a difficult piece or chord progression.

7. Practicing Without a Metronome is Like...

...playing tennis without a net. Without a net, you are just hitting tennis balls wherever. Without a metronome, you are just playing notes wherever you want. Without a metronome, you don’t have any metric to measure whether you are succeeding at your exercise. Unless the text specifically prompts you to practice out of time, practice with a metronome.

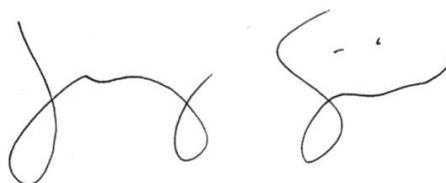
8. Play with Others

I know it sounds scary now, but play with others *as soon as possible*. Jazz is social music and you will learn so much by playing in an ensemble. Not only will your bandmates give you new ideas for listening, practicing, and growth, but playing in an ensemble will reinforce your ability to stay in time and follow the form. To return to the language metaphor, it is important to actually have conversations with others regularly instead of always studying alone. By the time you reach Unit 6, you should be highly qualified to contribute to an ensemble.

9. Don’t Give Up

Learning jazz is a long process. Simply sticking with it even when practicing feels hard is one of the most crucial keys to success. If you keep practicing and trust the process, progress will come.

I look forward to hearing the musical poetry that you add to the jazz tradition! I wish you many happy hours of practicing, listening, and experimenting at the piano!



Jeremy

Unit 1

Getting Oriented



Scan Here for
Unit 1 Videos

Improvisation Exercise 1 – Drone Improvisation

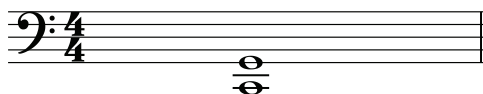
In the course of learning to become a skilled jazz improviser, a student must learn many new things. Throughout the course of this book, you will learn about scales, modes, arpeggios, non-chord tones, upper extensions, and much more.

An equally important part of becoming a better jazz improviser is learning to apply many things you probably already know about music. To this end, in the first few units, you will be practicing **drone improvisations**, improvisations over an unchanging accompaniment pattern. During these drone improvisations, you will practice creating improvisations that ascribe to some of the most fundamental tenets of good melody-making.

Ground Rules

- Spend 5-10 minutes a day doing drone improvisations.
- Always use a timer with your drone improvisations. Otherwise, the improvisations can seem endless and unfocused. One or two minutes is a good amount of time for each point of focus.
- Always have a goal or focus for your drone improvisation. If you are not focused, the time you spend improvising will merely reinforce your previous habits, the antithesis of growth.
- Drone improvisations can be practiced out of time to allow you to explore without the constraints of metronomic rhythm. Keep the mood meditative. This is not the time to show off your flashy technique.

For now, play a low fifth in the left hand. Repeat as necessary when the sound fades.



In the right hand, improvise using the C major scale, the white keys on the piano. Focus on the three points below for this unit. Even though these points might seem simple, take one at a time and give them your full attention for your short improvisation.

Points of Focus

1. Are you *really* listening to yourself as you play?

Listen to each note. Is it tense? Resolved? Beautiful? Ugly? Is it leading somewhere? Stable? Boring? Intriguing?

How is your melody? Singable? Curvy? Flat? Jagged? Don't judge yourself as you play, but examine your melodies in the same way a fascinated scientist might watch an exciting experiment, with rapt attention.

2. Do your phrases have a clear beginning and ending?

Good melodies happen in phrases, not in endless streams. While you improvise, focus on creating a clear sense of when you are playing a phrase and when there is space in between phrases. Practice taking your hand all the way off the piano in between phrases. How long can you wait in between phrases? Could you try giving each of your phrases a dynamic shape? The most common shape is to crescendo slightly to the middle of the phrase and then decrescendo from the middle to the end.

3. What kinds of rhythms are you using?

*Most of us have rhythms that we default to if we are uncomfortable. For some, this means long notes whereas for others this means a constant stream of eighth notes. Listen to yourself and ask yourself what kinds of rhythms you use most commonly (just observe, don't try to control). Then, add whatever element might be missing. Maybe you could use more triplets? More long notes? Some **syncopation**, that is, prominence of offbeat notes? Later, you will be given lots of clear direction about rhythm, but for now, begin to become conscious of your habits.*

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *This is pretty easy for me. Can I skip it?*

A: Drone improvisation isn't meant to be easy or hard. It is meant to be habit-forming. If you find it easy...great! Keep doing it! Just like eating healthy or taking a bath in the morning is not difficult but needs to be done, drone improvisations reinforce good musical habits when done consistently. If it is so easy that your mind wanders, then you are not doing it correctly – focus up and see how creative you can be within the confines of the exercise.

Q: *Can I use pedal?*

A: In general, you are not going to use any pedal for anything in this book...with the exception of these drone improvisations. Your drone improvisations can have a “new age” sound and be as pretty and pedal-drenched as you want them to be.

For everything else in the book, please stay off the pedal. It is not needed!

Swing Feel Basics 1

Swing is the standard rhythmic feel for jazz. With over one hundred years of history, hundreds of subgenres, and different regional interpretations, swing is not simply one thing. In fact, it is a living concept that changes depending on tempo, region, subgenre, and the individual musician.

With that in mind, the following are good rules to get you started with swing, but only by combining these rules with intensive listening can you achieve a nuanced sense of swing rhythm.

1. The beat should be divided into three parts.

Instead of dividing the beat equally in half, as in music with straight eighth notes, in swing music, the beat is divided into three equal parts. As a result, any note on the offbeat should be played on the third part of the beat. As you become accustomed to swing feel, you will probably have to mentally subdivide each beat into three (“one-two-three, two-two-three, three-two-three, four-two-three”). Said another way, any swing piece in 4/4 time might feel like it is in 12/8.

2. Pairs of eighth notes are uneven.

Because the beat is divided into three instead of two, eighth notes can’t possibly be even. When playing a string of eighth notes, the eighth notes on the beat should be played on the first of the three subdivisions, but the offbeat eighth notes should be played on the third subdivision of the beat (sometimes called the **third partial** of the beat). Regardless of whether an offbeat eighth note is all by itself or paired with an eighth note on the beat, it should still be played on the third partial of the beat.

The image shows two musical staves in 4/4 time. The first staff is labeled 'Straight Eighths' and shows a sequence of eighth notes: quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter. The second staff is labeled 'Swung Eighths' and shows the same sequence of notes but with a swung feel. Brackets above the notes indicate the subdivisions: 1, 2, 3, 2, 2, 3, 3. The first staff also has a bracket above the first two eighth notes labeled '3', and the second staff has a bracket above the first two eighth notes labeled '3'.

3. The offbeat receives more weight than the note on the beat.

Here is the tricky part! Whereas classical and pop musicians generally give slightly more emphasis to notes on the beat compared to notes off the beat, jazz musicians put extra weight on the shorter, offbeat eighth note. For many musicians from a classical background, this is very unintuitive and requires a great deal of focused practice.

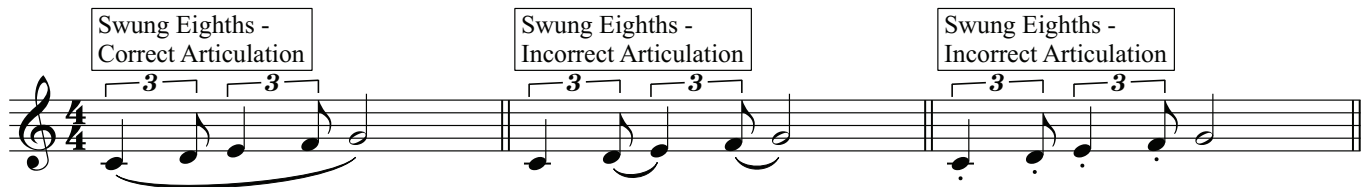
To reinforce this principle, many students find it helpful to use scat syllables. **Scat syllables** are nonsense words that can be used to sing jazz melodies in place of lyrics. For a pair of eighth notes, use the scat syllables “doo-VAH,” singing the “doo” for the longer, unaccented eighth and the “VAH” for the shorter, accented eighth.

The image shows two musical staves in 4/4 time. The first staff is labeled 'Swung Eighths - Correct Accents' and shows a sequence of eighth notes: quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter. The second staff is labeled 'Swung Eighths - Incorrect Accents' and shows the same sequence of notes but with incorrect accents. Brackets above the notes indicate the subdivisions: 1, 2, 3, 2, 2, 3, 3. Below the staves, the text reads: "doo - VAH doo - VAH doo".

In notating the difference between the two eighth notes, this book uses a tenuto to show that the weight goes on the offbeat. A tenuto was chosen instead of an accent mark because accent marks usually indicate a harsh or disruptive articulation change, a bigger emphasis than is needed.

4. Eighth notes are played legato.

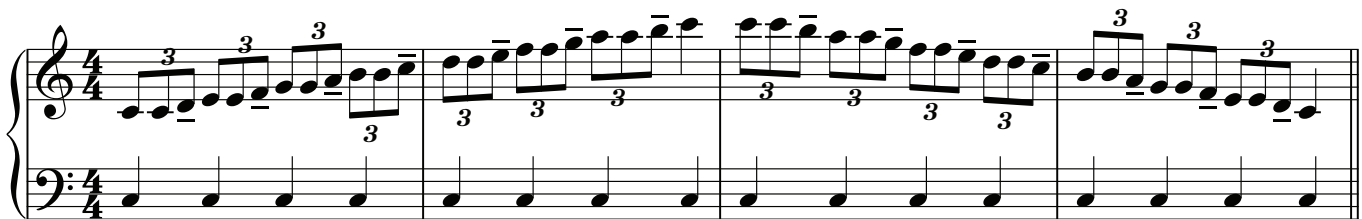
Jazz musicians play consecutive eighth notes as long, legato phrases with no space in between. Space is only placed between consecutive eighth notes for special effect. Legato phrasing includes repeated notes, which should be played without allowing the key to come all the way up. Even for repeated notes, no space should be heard between consecutive eighth notes.



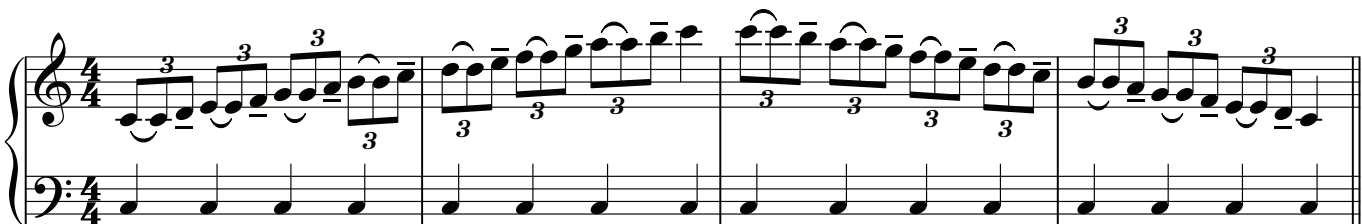
Coordination Exercise 1

Throughout this book, you will be learning **coordination exercises**, scale exercises written with the goal of helping solidify the relationship between your right and left hands.

This exercise has two parts. In the first part, repeat every other note of a major scale to create the three-part subdivision of the beat needed for swing feel. Your left hand will keep time with quarter notes so that you are able to clearly feel the beat. Practice emphasizing the note on the third partial of the beat as notated below.



When you are ready, remove the repeated note but continue to hear it in your head. Keep your focus on emphasizing the note on the third partial of the triplet. You are now playing the equivalent of swung eighth notes.



FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *I'm playing the accents but I find myself playing loudly. Am I doing it right?*

A: Yes, but consider making the nonaccented notes softer. If your unaccented note is played at a mezzo forte dynamic, you have no choice but to make your accents forte or fortissimo. The quieter the basic tone, the easier it is to create a variety of accents without feeling like you are pounding on the piano. A mental trick is to think about deemphasizing the note on the beat to create the “doo-VAH” effect rather than emphasizing the offbeat note.

Swing Exercises

Play the simple passages below. Focus on your swing rhythm and articulation. Subdivide the beat into three parts, place the weight on the offbeat eighth notes (it often helps to write in tenuto markings over the appropriate notes), and practice speaking “doo-VAH” along with the correct eighth notes. Remember that no matter where the phrase starts, “doo” always goes with eighth notes on the beat and “VAH” always goes with offbeat eighth notes.

For now, you can play these exercises with just one hand at a time or keep time using repeated quarter note C's in your resting hand. In the next unit, you will be learning some stylistically-appropriate accompanying patterns. Though these exercises seem simple, vigilantly listen for the correct articulation and beat subdivision.

A

B

C

D

E

Chord Symbol Basics

Chord symbols are a short-hand notation that quickly present the chords to a song. Chord symbols are perfect for jazz because they are specific enough to give musicians a shared sense of the harmony, but open-ended enough to give musicians a chance to create their own interpretation. Jazz musicians mainly work from what's called a **lead sheet**, a form of notation that presents the melody of a song with chord symbols above the staff. *The Real Book* is a collection of lead sheets.

It is important to remember that chord symbols give information rather than instructions. Just because a chord symbol lists a specific extension or alteration, it doesn't mean that everyone in the band needs to play it. Chord symbols convey as much as possible in a small space but it is up to the individual player to decide how to interpret, voice, and color chords for themselves.

Most jazz chord symbols have a four-part form:

1. The first part lists the **root** of the chord, the note upon which the chord is built. In jazz, the root of the chord is always presented as a capital letter, unlike in classical music where minor chords are often designated with a lower case letter.
2. The second part describes the **sonority** of the basic triad. There are five primary options:
 - Major triad. No symbol used.
 - Minor triad. Symbol is “m,” “min,” or “-”
 - Suspended triad. Symbol is “sus.” A **suspended triad** is a triad in which the fourth note of the scale replaces the third.
 - Diminished triad. Symbol is “o” or “dim.” A **diminished triad** is a minor triad with a lowered fifth.
 - Augmented triad. Symbol is “+.” An **augmented triad** is a major triad with a raised fifth.
3. The third part is a superscript number that indicates the fourth note of the chord. For a **triad**, a three-note chord, there will be no third part because the chord only has three notes. There are three primary options:
 - Major seventh. Symbol is “maj7” or “Δ7.”
 - Lowered/dominant seventh (a minor seventh interval about the root). Symbol is a superscript numeral “7” only.
 - Major sixth above the root. Symbol is a superscript numeral “6.”

Sometimes, higher odd numbers like “9,” “11,” or “13” will be used in place of a “7,” typically to indicate that a specific interval above the root is part of the melody of the piece.

4. The fourth part indicates alterations or extensions that need to be added above the normal chord symbol. These are typically enclosed in parentheses to avoid confusion with the other parts of the chord. Often times, these take the form of easy-to-follow instructions. (b5) means to lower the fifth by a half step. (#9) means to raise the ninth by a half step. This book will cover alterations in depth starting in Unit 10.

Here are a few chord symbols with four-part analysis:

C^{Δ7}

- C = the root of the chord. The chord is based on C.
- There is no symbol indicating a triad type, which indicates that the triad is major.
- The symbol “Δ7” is used to indicate the fourth note. This indicates a major seventh.
- There is no indication of an extra alteration or extension.

The notes of this chord are C, E, G, and B.

E_bm⁷

- E-flat is the root of the chord.
- The “m” indicates that the triad is a minor triad.
- The superscript “7” with no extra symbol indicates that the seventh is a lowered/dominant seventh, a minor seventh interval above the root.
- There is no indication of an extra alteration or extension.

The notes of this chord are E-flat, G-flat, B-flat, and D-flat.

F⁷(_b9)

- F is the root of the chord.
- There is no symbol indicating a triad type, which indicates that the triad is a major triad.
- The superscript “7” with no extra symbol indicates that the seventh is a lowered/dominant seventh, a minor seventh interval above the root.
- The (_b9) indicates that the ninth of the chord should be lowered by a half step.

The notes of this chord are F, A, C, E-flat, and G-flat.

C[#]6

- C-sharp is the root of the chord.
- There is no symbol indicating a triad type, which indicates that the triad is a major triad.
- The superscript “6” indicates the major sixth of the scale is the fourth note added.
- There is no indication of an extra alteration or extension.

The notes of this chord are C-sharp, E-sharp (F), G-sharp, and A-sharp.

D

- D is the root of the chord.
- There is no symbol indicating a triad type, which indicates that the triad is a major triad.
- There is no symbol or numeral indicating a fourth note, meaning the chord is a triad.
- There is no indication of an extra alteration or extension.

The notes of this chord are D, F-sharp, and A.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: For the chord symbol “E \flat 7” how do I know whether E-flat is the root or if the “ \flat 7” means it is an E chord with a lowered seventh?

A: The fourth note of a chord will never be altered using a flat or a sharp. It is indicated using the symbols discussed – superscript numeral “7” for a lowered/dominant seventh, “maj7,” or “ Δ 7,” for a major seventh.

Q: I have studied figured bass. Shouldn’t “E \flat 6” indicate an E-flat chord in first inversion?

A: This is a totally different system. Disregard anything you know about figured bass. In chord symbol notation, inversions are indicated by **slashes**. To indicate an inversion, write the chord, draw a slash, and then write the desired bass note. For example, Dm \flat 7/F is a D minor seventh chord with F in the bass, or as jazz musicians might say “D minor seventh over F.”

Q: Why are there multiple ways to indicate the same chord? Do they mean anything different?

A: Because jazz has its roots in folk traditions, differences are often regional. Although jazz educators have done their best to standardize chord notations, different musicians can’t agree on a single notation. The different symbols simply mean that people were introduced to chord symbols in different ways.

Three Essential Chord Types

Don’t feel overwhelmed by all of the possible combinations of these elements. For the vast majority of this book, you will be dealing with three crucial chord types.

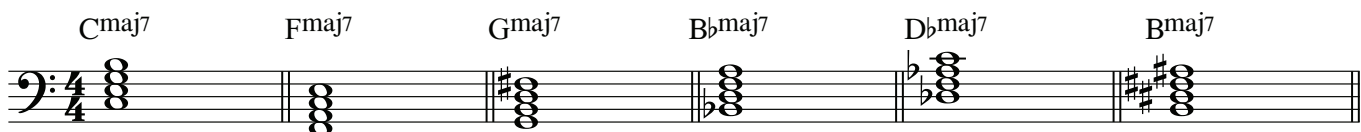
1. Major Seventh Chord

Possible Chord Symbols Using C as the Root: Cmaj \flat 7, C Δ 7

Three Ways to Find It:

- Select the first, third, fifth, and seventh notes of the major scale based on the root of the chord.
- Combine a major triad based on the root with a major seventh. The major seventh is the note one half step below the root.
- Stack intervals starting from the root. First, use a major third, then add a minor third, then another major third.

Sound: Bright but with a little more nostalgia than a simple major triad



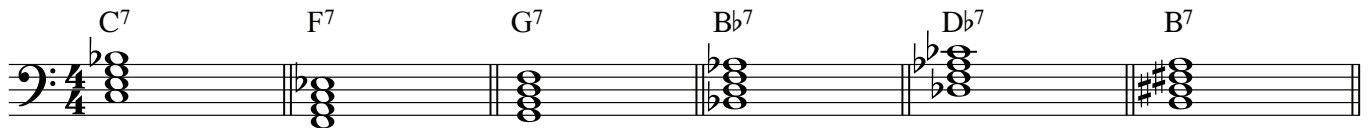
2. Dominant Seventh Chord

Possible Chord Symbols Using C as the Root: C⁷

Three Ways to Find It:

- Starting with a major seventh chord based on the root, lower the seventh by a half step.
- Combine a major triad based on the root with a minor seventh. The minor seventh is the note two half steps below the root.
- Stack intervals starting from the root. First stack a major third, then add a minor third, then another minor third.

Sound: Tense, like it wants to resolve. Familiar to those with classical experience.



3. Minor Seventh Chord

Possible Chord Symbols Using C as the Root: Cm⁷, C⁻⁷, Cmin⁷

Three Ways to Find It:

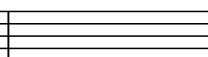
- Starting with a major seventh chord based on the root, lower the third and the seventh by a half step.
- Combine a minor triad based on the root with a minor seventh. The minor seventh is the note two half steps below the root.
- Stack intervals starting from the root. First, stack a minor third, then add a major third, and another minor third.

Sound: Not quite the melancholic sad we associate with minor. A little ambivalent or undecided.

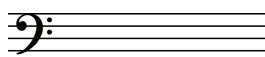
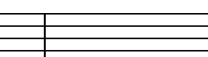
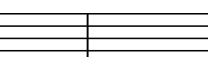
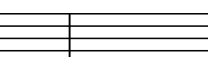
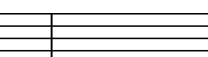
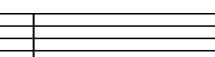


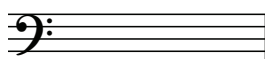
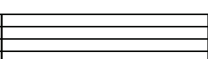
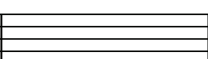
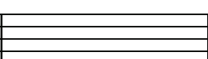
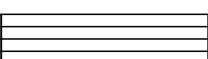
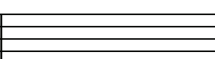
Written Practice

Write out the correct notes for the three main chord types as indicated below.

| F ⁷ | A ^{major} 7 | B ^{minor} 7 | G ^{minor} 7 | A ^b major7 | D ^{major} 7 |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

| 7 | E ⁷ | E ^b m ⁷ | C ⁷ | D ^b m ⁷ | F ^{minor} 7 | D ⁷ |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|----------------|
|  |  |  |  |  |  | |

| 13 | E ^{minor} 7 | B ^b major7 | C [#] m ⁷ | A ^{minor} 7 | B ^b 7 | E ^{major} 7 |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|----------------------|
|  |  |  |  |  |  | |

| 19 | F [#] 7 | F ^{minor} 7 | D ⁷ | G ^{minor} 7 | B ^{minor} 7 | C [#] major7 |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|-----------------------|
|  |  |  |  |  |  | |

Practicing Major, Minor, and Dominant Chords

The sooner you get lightning-fast at decoding these chords symbols, the faster you will be able to move on to the more fun parts of playing jazz. To that end, practice the following:

1. Create flash cards for all thirty-six major, minor, and dominant seventh chords (one for all twelve possible roots for major, minor, and dominant seventh chords) with the chord symbol on the front and the correct notes for the chord on the back. Practice looking at the chord symbol and playing the chord. Then check the back to double-check you have the correct notes. As you get good, practice with a metronome to see how quickly you can locate the correct notes.
2. A **vamp** is a section of a piece that's repeated until a cue to move on. Compose your own short **vamp pieces** by selecting four flash cards and playing each chord for two measures, repeating the progression until it feels solid. Experiment with styles! Use familiar styles like broken chords or oompah or create your own style. As you get comfortable with the chords, challenge yourself to find the chords faster by playing the chords for only one measure each, then two beats each, and then for only one beat each.
3. Leaf through *The Real Book* searching for major, minor, or dominant seventh chords. Wherever you see one of those chords, play it! If you'd like to play full tunes, search for the tunes in the Tune Bank. The Tune Bank contains tunes that use major, minor, and dominant seventh chords almost exclusively.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *Should I be playing all of these chords in root position or should I use inversions to keep them closer together?*

A: For now, simply play them stacked up in root position. Later, you will learn how to put these chords into fancy voicings and manipulate them in countless ways. Practice with these chords in the left hand or doubled in both hands. If you are comfortable with inversions, you are welcome to practice putting these chords in inversions, but correct inversions are not a priority at this stage of your jazz education.

Q: *Does the overall key signature play any role in determining the correct notes for a chord?*

A: No! The key signature is irrelevant to the notes of a chord and the notes of a chord do not change based on the key of a piece. A C major seventh chord has the notes C, E, G, and B whether it is in the key of C major, F major, B major, or G-sharp major.

Q: *How high or low should I play these chords?*

A: Later, I will be giving you very specific rules about the best register for different kinds of jazz voicings. For now, trust your ear. On my piano, I find that chords sound too low as the lowest note approaches F2. On the high end, work to keep out of the melody range. Keep the highest note lower than G4. For a point of reference, middle C is C4.

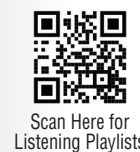
Q: *I see chords in parentheses in some of the pieces in The Real Book. What does that mean?*

A: Great question! Parentheses are used for two types of chords:

1. Parentheses are used for a **turnaround**, a single chord or short progression intended to facilitate repeating back to the beginning of a piece. Turnarounds are usually written in parentheses because they should be played every time except for the very last time. The last time through, the turnaround should not be played because the chords designed to repeat back to the beginning will disrupt the sense of an ending.
2. Parentheses are sometimes used for **alternate chord changes**, a substitute harmonic option to the standard chords. These changes are included because as different musicians have recorded pieces, they have harmonized the melodies with different chord progressions. Sometimes these different harmonizations are very similar and sometimes they are wildly different. Great jazz musicians often know many different harmonizations for a single tune. For now, knowing alternate chord changes isn't important. Disregard the chords in parentheses.

GUIDED LISTENING 1 –

“Freddie Freeloader” by Miles Davis



Stop! Don't even think about skipping the guided listening activities. They are the most important part of the book! Jazz is, at its core, an aural tradition. Any study of jazz without gobs and gobs of listening is truly futile. Take this seriously and it will pay off.

I recommend that you listen to each suggested track at least twenty times. Good jazz musicians listen repeatedly to their favorite tracks until they can effortlessly sing all of the melodies and improvised solos. Listen not just to the soloist and not just to the pianist, but let your ear wander to different instruments.

“Freddie Freeloader” is the second track from Miles Davis’ 1959 album *Kind of Blue*.

Miles Davis (1926-1991) was an American trumpet player and arguably the most influential musician in jazz history. Not only was Davis a virtuoso trumpeter and an improviser of immense creativity, but he was one of the best bandleaders and most creative innovators in jazz history. Many historians assert that Davis’ groups remained at the pinnacle of the artform for five different eras of jazz history, a stunning accomplishment. Alumni of his band include some of the most legendary jazz musicians of all time, including John Coltrane, Bill Evans, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Chick Corea, Keith Jarrett, and many more.

***Kind of Blue* (1959)** is generally considered to be the greatest jazz album of all time. Critics and listeners love the album because of first, the lineup of players, which comprises many of the greatest musicians of all time on their instruments; second, the tunes, many of which have become standard fare for musicians; and third, the important stylistic shifts launched by this album, which will be discussed later in this book.

PERSONNEL

Miles Davis, trumpet

John Coltrane, tenor saxophone

Cannonball Adderley, alto saxophone

Wynton Kelly, piano

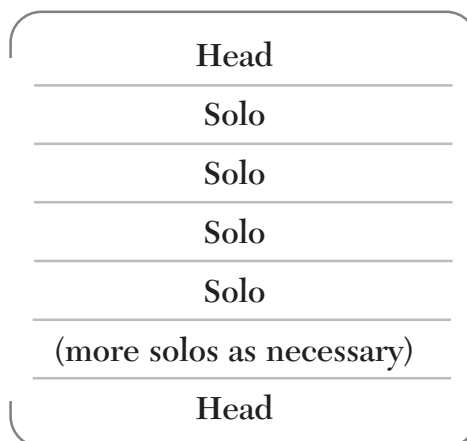
(this is the only track that Kelly plays on; the great pianist

Bill Evans plays on the rest of the album)

Paul Chambers, bass

Jimmy Cobb, drums

Although a jazz performance can be many things, ranging from a fully-notated orchestral piece to a completely improvised avant garde set of noises, most traditional jazz performances follow a **sandwich format** that resembles the following:



The ensemble first performs the **head**, the main melody, once or twice. The length of the head is called a **chorus**. The **head in** refers to the melody played at the beginning of the piece. The **head out** refers to the melody played at the end of the piece.

After the head, the musicians take turns improvising **solos**, new melodies created over the same chord progression as the head. These solos might each last for one chorus or for multiple choruses. In general, the number of choruses each musician improvises isn't preset. Instead, a soloist cues the next soloist when they're done improvising. Because the chord progression is the same as for the head, each chorus of solo will be the same number of measures as the head. Occasionally, on slower pieces, musicians might split a chorus, and take only a half chorus each. It is not necessary for each soloist to improvise for the same number of choruses. Each one creates their own spontaneous story.

Follow along with your Real Book as you listen to "Freddie Freeloader." You will notice that although the head has a first and second ending, making it twenty-four-measures long, a note at the end of the first ending instructs the player to use only the first ending for solos, creating the twelve-measure form.

Here's a map of the track, which you will notice, follows the sandwich format. Count the choruses along with the track, remembering that each chorus is twelve measures long:

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Head (24 measures, first + second ending) | 0:00-0:44 |
| Piano solo (Wynton Kelly, 4 choruses) | 0:44-2:14 |
| Trumpet solo (Miles Davis, 6 choruses) | 2:14-4:30 |
| Tenor saxophone solo (John Coltrane, 5 choruses) | 4:30-6:21 |
| Alto saxophone solo (Cannonball Adderley, 5 choruses) | 6:21-8:13 |
| Bass solo (Paul Chambers, 2 choruses) | 8:13-8:55 |
| Head (24 measures, first + second ending) | 8:55-end |

Here are a few tricks to help you follow along with the form of the recording:

- Use your finger to count the beats in each measure on the page. Tap four times for the four quarter notes in each measure. In the first line, there are four measures of B-flat dominant seventh, so tap 16 times. In the next line, there are two measures of E-flat dominant seventh (8 taps) and two measures of B-flat dominant seventh (8 taps). In the first ending, there is one measure of F dominant seventh (4 taps), one measure of E-flat dominant seventh (four taps), and two measures of A-flat dominant seventh (8 taps). If you have trouble determining the quarter note, listen to the bass. The bass is playing quarter notes for essentially this entire track.
- Play the chords softly along with the recording. Remember that in the solos, the musicians only take the first ending. You can practice simply holding the chords for the appropriate length or repeating them every quarter note, just like the tapping above.
- Sing the melody of the tune during the solos. Most jazz musicians actually keep the melody in the back of their mind while they are improvising in order to help them keep the form of the tune.

UNIT 1 ASSIGNMENTS

1. Improvisation Exercise 1 – Drone Improvisation 1

- a. Are you listening to yourself?
- b. Are you playing in phrases with clear beginnings and endings?
- c. What kind of rhythms are you using?

2. Practice Coordination Exercise 1 in all twelve keys

3. Play through the Swing Exercises paying attention to your articulation

4. Practice finding Major, Minor, and Dominant Seventh Chords at the piano

- a. Flash cards
- b. Vamp piece
- c. Real Book practice

5. Guided Listening 1: “Freddie Freeloader” by Miles Davis

- a. Listen at least twenty times
- b. Learn to follow the form of the tune during the head and solos

Unit 2

Comping Basics



Scan Here for
Unit 2 Videos

Improvisation Exercise 2 – Drone Improvisation 2

Continue improvising in C with a simple fifth in the left hand for 1-2 minute focused sessions. This week, you have two new prompts for focusing your practice:

Points of Focus

1. Use a variety of hand positions to create melodies with interesting shapes.

For many pianists, even advanced pianists, first improvisations usually take place in simple **five-finger positions**, with fingers on contiguous keys (i.e. C, D, E, F, G). To create melodies with a variety of shapes, a pianist must vary their hand position. Pianists should **cross over** and **cross under** as they do when playing scales. They should **expand** their hand to play larger intervals and then **contract** it in a new area (think of the melody for “Somewhere Over the Rainbow”). They should also spread their fingers out to **arpeggio position**, with one key in between each of the first four fingers (think C-E-G-B). As you play, experiment with each of these positions and use them to make melodies that have a variety of intervals. Are you using sixths and sevenths as well as seconds and thirds? How frequently are you changing directions?

2. Improvise in a call-and-response format.

Call and response is an essential element of African-American musical traditions, including jazz. Call and response dates back to songs sung by slaves picking cotton and is essential to the cadence of the gospel church. Although there aren’t specific rules for creating a call and response melody, consider that the call phrase and the response phrase should be related and roughly equal in length. Leave ample space between the call and response phrases to make them sound truly separate. A good rule of thumb is to rest between phrases for about as long as you play each phrase.

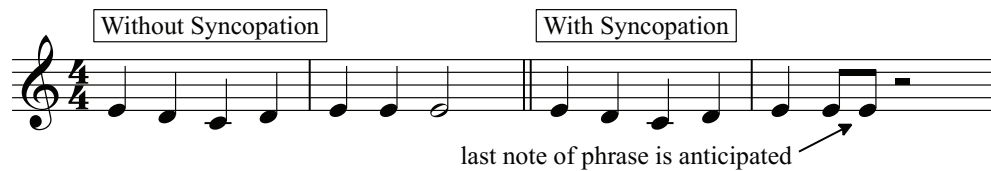
Swing Feel Basics 2

Even though eighth notes are the focal point of swing music, other rhythmic units have stylized articulation that defines the swing style.

1. Play a percussive accent on eighth notes followed by a rest.

When an eighth note is followed by a rest, it should be played with a short, percussive accent, an eight out of ten in volume. For these eighth notes, use the scat syllable “DIT.”

Eighth notes followed by rests usually create syncopation by anticipating a note that would have been played on the beat for a “straight” version of a melody. **Anticipating** a note means playing it an eighth note earlier than expected. Examine the difference between syncopated and non-syncopated versions of “Mary Had a Little Lamb” below:



The accented eighth note is notated with both an accent and staccato in the phrases below. Note that tenuto markings are placed on offbeat eighth notes that aren’t followed by a rest, as outlined in Unit 1.



FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *These phrases all end on offbeats. Is that necessary for the percussive accent?*

A: Actually, yes! If a phrase ends on a beat, the last note is typically notated as a quarter note. Therefore, you won’t find many eighth notes on the beat followed by a rest.

Q: *The examples above are written as regular eighth notes. Should I be swinging them?*

A: Yes! From here on out, please assume that eighth notes should be swung unless otherwise indicated. Practice subdividing the beat into three parts, counting the subdivision out loud or in your head.

2. Quarter notes should be played long but not connected.

In a swing style, quarter notes are generally played long but not connected. This articulation is appropriate for quarter notes on the beat or off the beat. Jazz musicians often talk about quarter notes as being “fat,” that is, taking up the entire length of the beat. The term “fat” also suggests that quarter notes should feel slow, countering many musicians’ tendency to rush quarter notes. Use the scat syllable “daht” for quarter notes. “Daht” represents quarter notes well because it has a long vowel but still has a clear ending.

3. Longer notes’ articulation is based on their entrance.

Swing articulation is less important for notes longer than a quarter note because as notes are held longer, the musician has less ability to make them swing or not swing. These notes can be played legato.

The entrance of longer notes matters. Notes that enter on the offbeat should be played on the third partial of the beat with a slight accent. Like offbeat eighth notes, say “VAH” for long notes entering on an offbeat. Notes that enter on the beat should be played with no accent. Like eighth notes on the beat, say “doo” for longer notes entering on a beat.

4. Practice with the metronome on beats two and four.

Jazz musicians frequently practice with the metronome on beats two and four because it simulates the **hi-hat** cymbals on the drumset. The hi-hat is a pair of foot-activated cymbals that face each other to create a crisp timbre. In jazz, the hi-hat is used to consistently keep time on beats two and four in a swing style. Aligning with the weak beats (two and four) rather than the strong beats (one and three) helps a musician to **lay back** on the time feel, sounding more relaxed than nervous.

Here's a chart reviewing articulation and scat syllables:

| NOTE TYPE | ARTICULATION | SCAT SYLLABLE |
|-------------------------------|--|---------------|
| Eighth note, on the beat | Legato, unaccented | doo |
| Eighth note, off the beat | Legato, with weight; on the third partial of the beat | VAH |
| Eighth note, followed by rest | Percussive accent (short) | DIT |
| Quarter note | Long but not connected | daht |
| Long note, on the beat | Legato, unaccented | doo |
| Long note, off the beat | Legato, with weight | VAH |

Examine the examples below for articulation and scat syllables. Speak and then play the examples with the metronome, treating the clicks of the metronome as though they were the second and fourth beats of a four-four measure. Always maintain the three-part subdivision of the beat.

daht daht daht doo VAH doo VAH doo doo VAH doo DIT VAH doo VAH

5

daht doo VAH doo DIT daht VAH doo VAH doo DIT daht doo DIT VAH daht doo DIT

9

VAH___ doo VAH doo-DIT VAH___ doo VAH doo DIT daht doo VAH___

Written Practice

Fill in the following examples below with your own scat syllables and articulation. Then practice playing them with a focus on the articulation, placing the clicks of the metronome on beats two and four.

The image shows three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff contains measures 1 through 4. The second staff, starting with a measure number '5', contains measures 5 through 8. The third staff, starting with a measure number '9', contains measures 9 through 12. The notation includes various note values such as quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests and ties.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *In measure four, why is the first eighth note a “VAH” rather than a “doo”?*

A: It comes on an offbeat. Offbeat eighth notes are always given the weight, whether they start the phrase or arrive in the middle of a phrase.

Q: *Are two eighth notes tied together a quarter note?*

A: Yes! Often times, copyists use two tied eighths instead of a quarter to show the middle of the measure. Treat it just like a normal quarter note – play long but not connected.

Q: *Should the quarter note “dahts” be accented?*

A: You should play quarter notes solidly, but you don’t need to play them with an accent. In terms of dynamics, quarter notes can be played at a level between a “doo” and a “VAH.”

Q: *When playing eighth-note triplets, should I place an emphasis on any of the triplets?*

A: No. Just play them legato and even.

Q: *What about sixteenth notes? What’s the correct articulation there?*

A: Sixteenth notes can be played legato without any special accents or emphasis. Many jazz musicians place irregular accents on sixteenth notes that reflect the shape of the melody, for instance, accenting leaps and **turn-around points**, notes where the melody’s direction goes from ascending to descending or vice versa.

Comping Basics

Comping is a word used to describe how a chordal instrument creates their own accompaniment part. Depending on who you ask, “comping” is said to be an abbreviation of either “accompanying” or “complementing.”

Comping is the result of three different inputs:

1. **The lead sheet.** The chord symbols give the accompanist instructions about the harmony and form.
2. **The style.** An accompanist will comp differently depending on whether they’re playing swing, ballad, funk, bossa nova, or salsa. Different styles will guide the accompanist to different voicing types, rhythms, and articulations.
3. **The situation.** Good musicians make different accompaniment decisions based on what’s happening around them. For example, if there are many soloists in a row, an accompanist might choose to accompany each slightly differently to create contrasts. If the soloist is playing very busily, the accompanist might choose to comp more sparsely. If a pianist is sharing the stage with a guitarist, the two instruments usually take turns accompanying to avoid overlap.

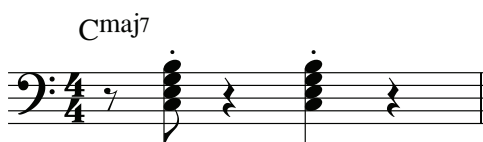
When a professional-level jazz pianist comps, the result is something somewhat random sounding to the untrained ear. Because good compers are always responding to the musicians around them, their comping is constantly changing.

To learn to comp effectively, however, you should start with predictable **comping patterns**. As you progress in your jazz piano journey, you will have more and more opportunity to mix and vary these comping patterns until your comping sounds as unpredictable as that of the jazz greats.

The Charleston, your first comping pattern, is an incredibly important jazz rhythm with comps on beats one and the “and of two.” Its name comes from James P. Johnson’s eponymous piece which launched a dance craze in the 1920s. Even though the rhythm is notated with one quarter note and one eighth note, play both chords equally short.



The Reverse Charleston uses the same rhythmic pattern as the Charleston but starts an eighth note later. For the Reverse Charleston, comp on the “and of one” and beat three. Again, even though the two chords are notated differently, play them with equally short, crisp articulation.

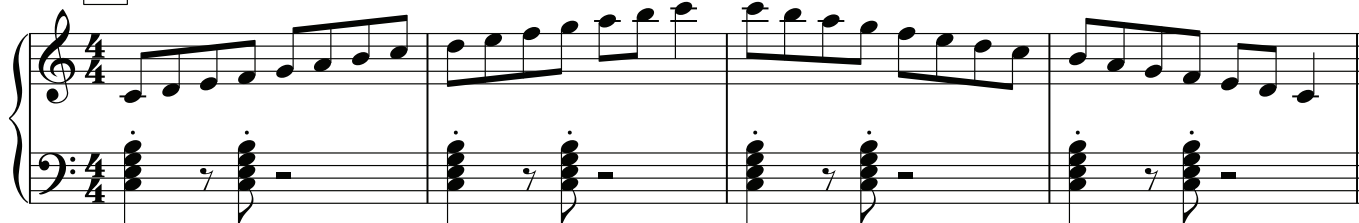


Coordination Exercise 2

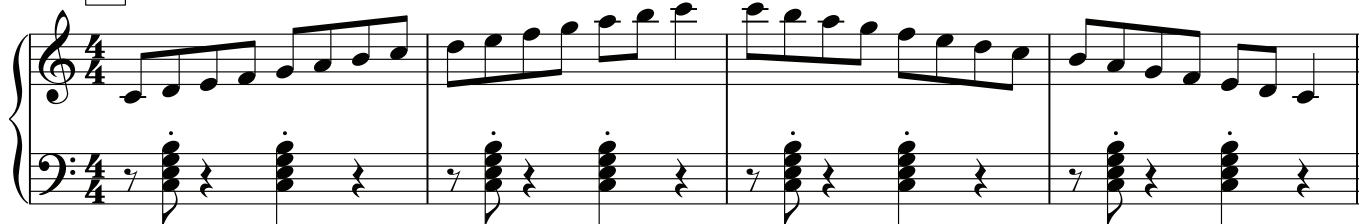
Practice these two comping patterns in the left hand while playing your major scales in the right hand. Line A uses the Charleston pattern, Line B uses the Reverse Charleston, and Lines C and D mix between the two patterns. Don't forget your swing articulation in the right hand as you play the comping patterns in the left.

For now, comp only using short, staccato chords. Your comps should be as loud and as long as a brush hitting a snare drum. Eventually, you will learn to mix long notes into your comping, but for now, please be vigilant and keep your comps short.

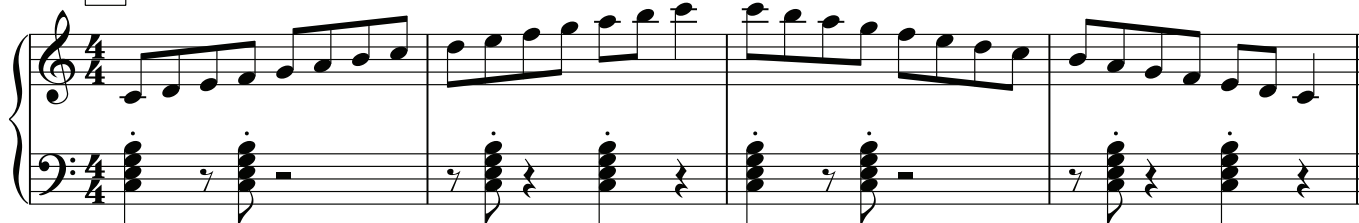
A



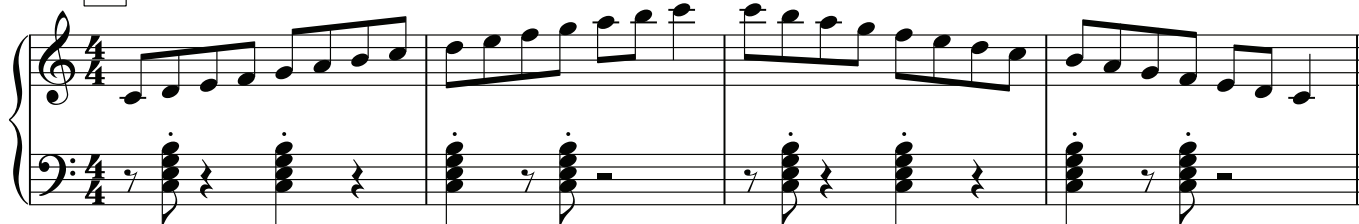
B



C



D



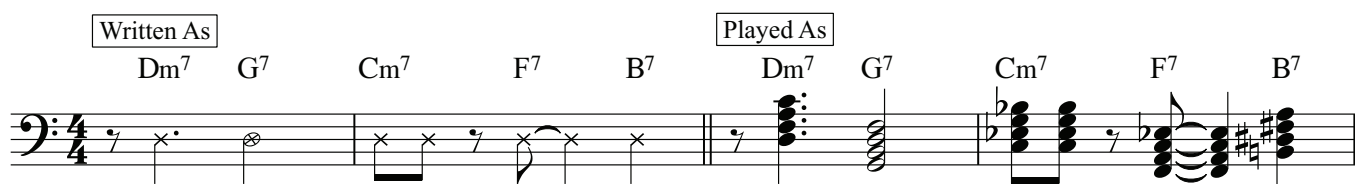
Comping Notations & Anticipations

Slash notation is used to indicate an improvised part. For chordal instruments, slashes usually indicate comping. Each slash represents a quarter note during which the instrumentalist should improvise their part. In non-duple time signatures, dotted slashes are frequently used to indicate dotted quarter notes.

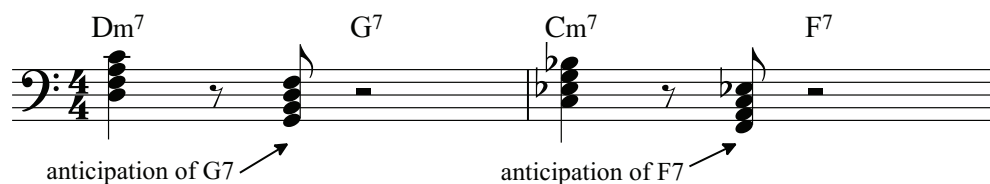


Rhythmic notation is used to indicate specific comping rhythms. In rhythmic notation, round noteheads are replaced by x's. When you see this notation, you should stop comping freely and play the specific rhythm indicated by the notation. This notation is generally used when the band is playing **hits**, rhythms that multiple musicians play together.

- Normal x's represent filled-in noteheads, such as quarter notes and eighth notes.
- x's with a circle around them indicate open noteheads, such as half notes and whole notes.
- Chords for each comp are written above the notation. If no chord is provided, repeat the most recent chord.



When comping, **anticipate** any chord changes by an eighth note. In other words, change chords a half beat earlier than actually indicated. For instance, in a measure with two chords, it is generally assumed the chords change on beats one and three. But when comping using the Charleston pattern, play the first chord of the measure on beat one and then anticipate the second chord of the measure for the comp on the “and of two.” Even though the chord technically doesn't start until beat three, pianists play this chord an eighth note early.



Comping on Jazz Standards

Practice comping the chords for at least three jazz standards found in *The Real Book*. Practice each piece four ways:

1. Comping with just the Charleston all the way through
2. Comping with just the Reverse Charleston all the way through
3. Alternate between the two comping patterns, comping two measures of Charleston and two measures of Reverse Charleston
4. Alternate between the two comping patterns, starting with one measure of Charleston then one measure of Reverse Charleston

Practice first with just the left hand. Then, add the right hand, first playing pieces with long note melodies like “Tune Up,” “Central Park West,” “All the Things You Are,” and “Mood Indigo.” Then, move on to tunes with more active melodies like “Afternoon in Paris,” “Groovin’ High,” and “Surrey with the Fringe on Top.”

Listen vigilantly to whether your offbeats are truly on the offbeats. For many students, comps that should be on the “and of two” drift to beat three and comps that should be on the “and of one” return to beat one. The syncopation is essential to the style. Don’t lose it!

Coordinating comping patterns with melodies can be difficult at first. When becoming accustomed to an unfamiliar hand coordination issue, pianists sometimes sketch in where the melody and chords align using rhythmic notation, placing an “x” under every melody note or rest where the left hand will comp. Check that your right hand and left hand are playing together wherever an “x” is written.

The image shows two musical patterns in 4/4 time. The first pattern, labeled "Charleston", consists of two measures: the first measure has a Dm7 chord and a melody starting on the second eighth note (marked with an 'x' below), and the second measure has a G7 chord and a melody starting on the first eighth note (marked with an 'x' below). The second pattern, labeled "Reverse Charleston", also consists of two measures: the first measure has a Dm7 chord and a melody starting on the first eighth note (marked with an 'x' below), and the second measure has a G7 chord and a melody starting on the second eighth note (marked with an 'x' below). Both patterns continue with Cm7 and F7 chords in the following measures, each with an 'x' marked under the melody note.

Personalizing a Melody 1

The Real Book presents a cookie-cutter version of the melodies of standard tunes. It is understood that the musician performing the piece will personalize the melody. To **personalize a melody** means to make it more expressive.

There are several ways to personalize a melody. Here are three ways to get started:

1. Change the rhythm.

Move notes originally written on the beat to the offbeats, placing them an eighth note earlier or later than originally written. Frequently, when changing the rhythm of a jazz piece, phrases that end with long notes are altered to end with short notes, creating the “doo-DIT” articulation you learned earlier.

The image shows two musical staves in 4/4 time. The top staff, labeled "Original Melody", shows a melody starting on the first beat with a quarter note, followed by a half note, and ending with a quarter note. The bottom staff, labeled "Personalized Melody", shows the same melody but with rhythmic changes: the first note is moved to the offbeat (marked "later than original"), the second note is moved to the offbeat (marked "earlier than original"), and the final note is shortened to a quarter note (marked "earlier/shorter than original").

2. Repeat melody notes.

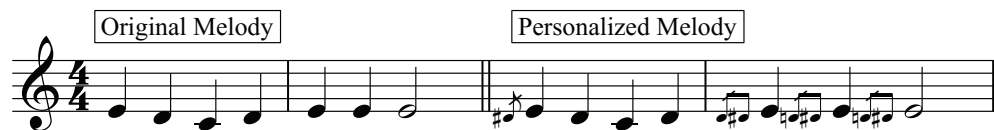
Repeating longer notes to create flowing eighth-note rhythms can add a sense of swing to unsyncopated melodies.



3. Add grace note slides.

Jazz musicians make melodies sound more vocal and personal by bending pitches. Pianists can't properly bend pitches, of course, but they can simulate a pitch bend by adding **grace notes**. Here are some tips to keep in mind regarding grace notes for jazz piano:

- Grace notes that simulate a pitch bend should always lead into the main note by a half step.
- Unlike classical pianists, jazz pianists don't try to play grace notes cleanly. In jazz, pianists allow their grace notes various amounts of overlap with the main note.
- Pianists can use individual grace notes or multiple grace notes to create the pitch bend effect.
- Grace notes below the main note are used much more often than grace notes above the main note.
- Grace notes are typically used to emphasize more important notes, such as longer notes or notes on the downbeat.



FAQ

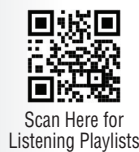
Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *Should I actually be sliding my fingers off of black keys in order to create grace note slides?*

A: Probably not. Different jazz pianists play grace notes different ways, but the most sophisticated pianists, in my opinion, usually use different fingers for the grace note and the main note. In a bluesy or boogie-woogie style, it is more common to use the same finger and physically slide off of a key, but the technique is a little limiting because it only works well going from a black key to an adjacent white key. Using different fingers will give you more options in a wider variety of keys.

GUIDED LISTENING 2 –

“Joy Spring” by Clifford Brown & Max Roach



“Joy Spring” is the fourth track from Clifford Brown and Max Roach’s 1954 album, *Clifford Brown and Max Roach*.

The piece, an original composition by trumpeter **Clifford Brown** (1930-1956) is unique in its harmonic scheme in which the key center ascends by half-step every eight measures, from F to G-flat to G. The track is most famous for Brown’s trumpet solo, which mixes memorable bluesy melodies with windy virtuosic double-time passages. **Double-time** is the device of using sixteenth notes as the primary rhythmic unit instead of eighth notes.

Sadly, although Brown’s career was very influential, it was very short. He died in a car accident at age 25. It is quite remarkable that in his short lifetime he contributed memorable albums like *Clifford Brown and Max Roach*, *Study in Brown*, and *Clifford Brown with Strings*, and wrote a handful of jazz standards, including “Joy Spring,” “Sandu,” and “Daahoud.”

Max Roach (1924-2007), the co-leader of the band, was a trail-blazing drummer who helped to invent the bebop drumming style and can be heard as a sideman for many of the greatest jazz musicians of the era including Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk, and Bud Powell. As a band leader in the 1960s, Roach contributed a memorable album, *We Insist! Freedom Now Suite*, which focused on the theme of civil rights.

PERSONNEL

Clifford Brown, trumpet

Harold Land, tenor saxophone

Richie Powell, piano

George Morrow, bass

Max Roach, drums

Form

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 0:00-0:11 | Introduction |
| 0:11-0:55 | Head (32 measures) |
| 0:55-0:58 | Solo Break |
| 0:58-1:44 | Tenor Saxophone Solo (1 chorus) |
| 1:44-3:20 | Trumpet Solo (2 choruses) |
| 3:20-4:08 | Piano Solo (1 chorus) |
| 4:08-4:56 | Trumpet/Tenor trade fours with drums (1 chorus) |
| 4:56-5:41 | Drum Solo (1 chorus) |
| 5:41-5:52 | Introduction |
| 5:52-6:37 | Head Out |
| 6:37-end | Three-Time Tag and Ending |

This piece follows a typical sandwich form, with a couple of modifications and additions. First, there is an **introduction** that lasts about twelve seconds before the first head. At 0:55, saxophonist Harold Land takes a **solo break**, a short, improvised section at the end of the head where the **rhythm section**, the piano, bass, and drums, stops playing. Solo breaks are a shared custom of experienced jazz musicians and aren't generally notated in a lead sheet. They create momentum and excitement leading into a solo.

The musicians trade fours starting at 4:05. **Trading fours** is a technique in which musicians alternate improvising for four measures at a time. Typically, as is the case here, instruments trade with the drums. Even when the musicians trade fours, they are following the form of the tune. Although no one is actively playing the harmony during the drum solos, the musicians hear the chords in their head during the drum solo and reenter at the appropriate spot in the chord progression.

Trading fours is followed by a **drum solo**. Drum solos are usually played over the form of the tune. This drum solo lasts for 32 measures, the length of one chorus. Musicians generally sing the melody of the tune in their head during the drum solo, allowing them to come in correctly when it is time for them to reenter. Good drum solos usually develop motifs and reference the rhythms on the melody. Pay attention to the drum solo and see what you can hear that makes it a meaningful musical statement.

This piece uses a **three-time tag** ending, typical of many jazz performances. You can hear the ending around 6:30. In a three-time tag, musicians repeat the ending phrase of the piece three times before doing a short fill and arriving at the last chord.

Listen intently to the Richie Powell's comping beneath the head and soloists. During the head, the piano, bass, and drums play hits together (listen to 0:16, 0:21, 0:27, and 0:29 to hear some hits). Powell includes the Charleston and Reverse Charleston in his comping. For example, you will hear the Charleston around 0:59, 1:02, 1:05, and 1:26 and the Reverse Charleston around 1:13. Listen closely for the basics. What articulation is he using? Does his comping change between soloists? About how frequently is he comping? Can you hear any interaction between Powell and the soloists? Notice, for instance, at the beginning of Clifford Brown's second chorus (2:32), when the trumpeter moves to the bottom of his range, Powell moves higher in the range of the piano to provide a better complement. Listen also to how he reacts to Max Roach's commentary on the drums.

Do you hear any patterns in his comping? For instance, in the last measure of an eight-measure section, Powell frequently plays on beats one and two with an accent on beat two. This helps to **mark the form**, signaling the end of the eight-measure section to the other band members. While it is not necessary to mark the form, it helps give bandmates confidence that everyone's in the same place.

If you listen closely, you can hear Powell reinforcing some bass notes, which is relatively uncommon for a pianist. At the end of each chorus, Powell plays a low C natural in the bass, a common technique known as a **pedal point**. Named after organ pedals, a pedal point is a stable, unchanging bass note. In jazz, as in classical music, it is most common to use a pedal point to emphasize the dominant (V) chord.

Finally, when Powell plays a solo starting at 3:20, he plays a melody in the right hand and comps for himself in the left hand. This is typical for piano solos. In this case, Powell's comping becomes less active as his right hand becomes more active. There are some moments when you can hear a sort of tennis match between the right and left hands as Powell creates a call and response between his two hands.

UNIT 2 ASSIGNMENTS

- 1. Improvisation Exercise 2 – Drone Improvisation 2**
 - a. Hand positions
 - b. Call and response
- 2. Fill out Written Practice and practice playing through examples**
- 3. Practice Coordination Exercise 2 in all twelve keys**
- 4. Select three jazz standards from *The Real Book* and practice playing the melody while comping with Charleston & Reverse Charleston patterns**
 - a. Comping with just the Charleston all the way through
 - b. Comping with just the Reverse Charleston all the way through
 - c. Alternate between the two comping patterns, comping two measures of Charleston and two measures of Reverse Charleston
 - d. Alternate between the two comping patterns, starting with one measure of Charleston then one measure of Reverse Charleston
- 5. For your three jazz standards, practice personalizing the melody adding syncopation, repeated notes, and grace note slides**
- 6. Guided Listening 2: “Joy Spring” by Clifford Brown and Max Roach**
 - a. Listen at least twenty times
 - b. Pay special attention to the piano comping, hits, and interactions

Unit 3

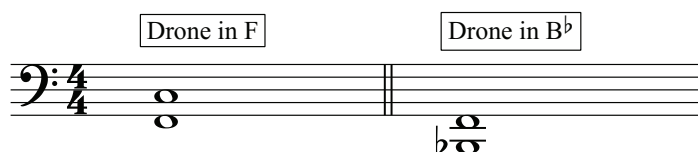
Introducing the ii-V-I



Scan Here for
Unit 3 Videos

Improvisation Exercise 3 – Drone Improvisation in F and B-Flat

For this unit, practice improvising over drones in the keys of F and B-flat. As you change keys, improvise using the major scale of the corresponding key. Although jazz musicians play in all keys, usually flat keys are studied first because they are more agreeable for saxophonists and trumpeters, who often lead bands.



Points of Focus

1. Use grace notes to add expression to your melodies.

In the last unit, you learned about using grace notes to personalize written melodies. Grace notes should also be used to personalize improvised melodies. Remember that grace notes are typically added a half step below the main note to simulate an expressive pitch bend or slide. As you improvise, use grace notes at places that meaningfully add expression, such as a long note or an expressive leap. Experiment with using one, two, three, or even four grace notes to ornament important notes.

2. Use repetition and sequences.

*Although improvisations are spontaneous, good improvisations are still organized. **Repetition** is the most meaningful way that an improvisation can sound organized. First, practice repeating your phrase verbatim. Experiment with different lengths of rests in between your repetitions. You could wait four measures before repeating yourself, two measures, one measure, or you could repeat yourself immediately after ending your phrase.*

*Then, see if you can create **sequences**, groups of phrases that repeat the same rhythms and melodic shapes starting at different pitch levels in the scale. Start simple with two- or three-note phrases, then get more complex. Remember that sequences can go down or up by step or by bigger intervals.*

At first, you might have to pause and think about how to sequence your motive. That's okay! Write out some sequences if it helps. But aim to get faster and faster until you can sequence simple motives spontaneously.

Drone Improvisation in F

original motif sequenced up by step

original motif sequenced up by a fourth

original motif sequenced down by a third

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *Won't I end up playing notes outside the scale if I make sequences?*

A: No. Sequences can be both chromatic and diatonic. In a chromatic sequence, intervals are literally transposed to create the exact same phrase in a different key center. In a diatonic sequence, the same general shape is maintained without leaving the scale. For a diatonic sequence, an interval might change between a major and minor third or between a perfect and diminished fifth based on where it falls in the scale. Focus on diatonic sequences as you practice your drone improvisation.

The ii-V-I Progression

The **ii-V-I (“two-five-one”) progression** and its components makes up a high percentage of the harmonic landscape of jazz standards. Because the progression is so common, jazz musicians spend a lot of time practicing voicings and **licks**, short set phrases, for ii-V-I progressions.

The ii-V-I progression consists of:

1. A minor seventh chord based on the second degree of a major scale
2. A dominant seventh chord based on the fifth degree of a major scale
3. A major seventh chord based on the root of the major scale

major seventh chord starting here

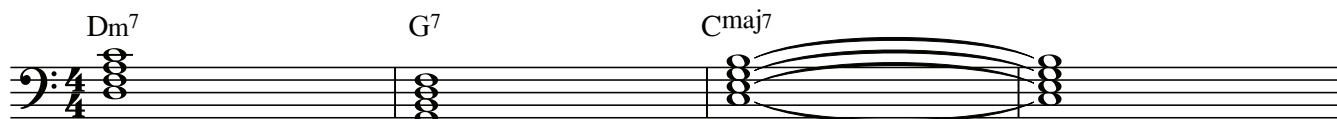
minor seventh chord starting here

dominant seventh chord starting here

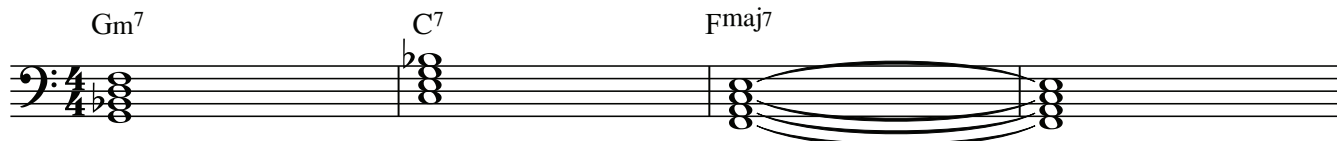
Root 2 3 4 5 6 7 (root)

ii-V-I progressions are named after the I chord, which defines the key center on which the progression is based. Below, you will find ii-V-I progressions in C, F, and B-flat major.

ii-V-I in C Major



ii-V-I in F Major



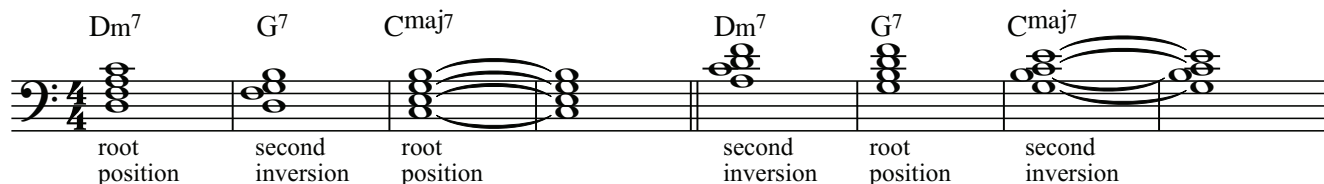
ii-V-I in B^b Major



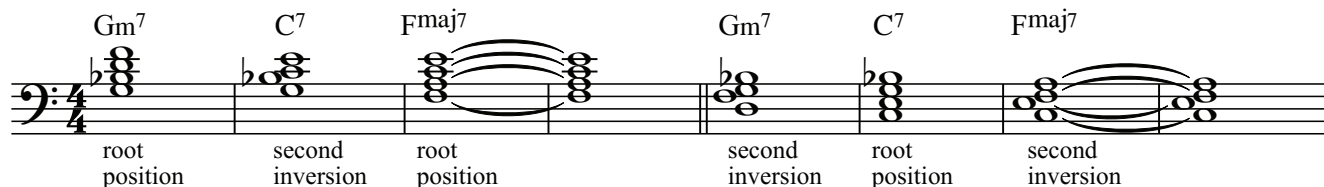
Later, you will be learning sophisticated voicings for your chords, but for now, as you practice your ii-V-I progressions, alternate between playing chords in root position and second inversion, with the fifth on bottom. If you play the inversions correctly, you will notice that either the bottom two notes move and the top two notes hold or the top two notes move and the bottom two hold.

Play the ii-V-I progressions below, watching for the finger patterns described above and listening for the resolutions.

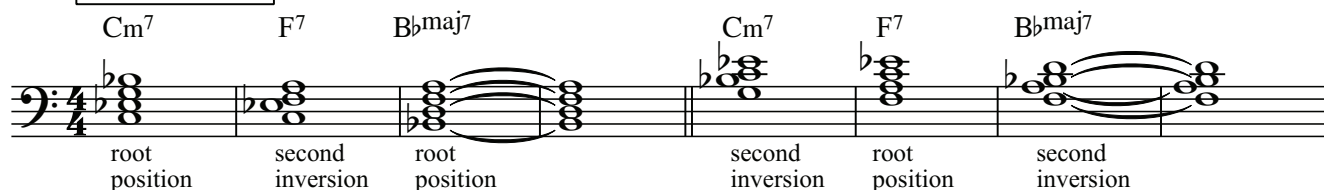
ii-V-I in C Major



ii-V-I in F Major



ii-V-I in B^b Major



FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *Why does the ii-V-I work?*

A: A few reasons! First, the bass notes move in fifths, which is very appealing to the ear in Western music (think of the circle of fifths). Second, the chords are all **diatonic** to the home key, meaning that they don't require any accidentals. Third, the ii is a predominant, the V is a dominant, and the I is a tonic, so the chords have a natural flow.

Q: *Are ii-V-I progressions always in major keys?*

A: Actually, no. Later in your studies, you will encounter minor ii-V-I's, which are significantly more complicated than the major ones you are learning now. For now, focus on the major ii-V-I's. There is plenty to learn.

Q: *In the examples above, why is the I chord held for two measures?*

A: This is common practice. Even though ii-V-I progressions have three chords, they are usually organized into a two- or four-measure phrase because musicians generally prefer phrases with an even number of measures.

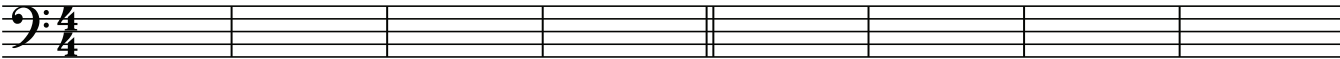
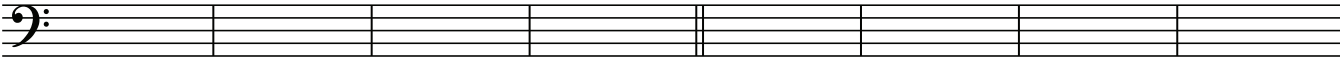
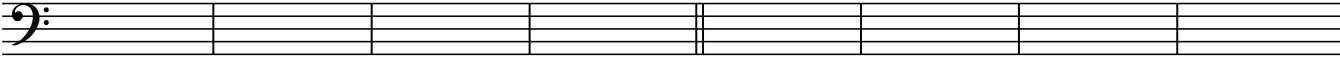
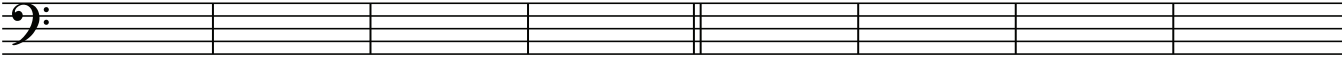
Q: *If a progression looks like a ii-V-I but has a major sixth chord instead of a major seventh chord as the I chord, is it still a ii-V-I?*

A: Yes. The major sixth chord (which looks like C⁶) is just a slightly different flavor of major chord, but it still can still be a I in a ii-V-I progression.

ii-V-I Practice

Although the ii-V-I is a relatively simple concept, you need to know these ii-V-I progressions inside and out – in your brain, in your muscle memory, and in your ear.

Start by filling in the missing chord symbols and key centers for the ii-V-I's given below. Remember that ii-V-I's are named after the key of the I chord rather than the first chord. Write out the notes of the chords as extra practice.

| | |
|--|--|
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">ii-V-I in D Major</div> <div style="margin-top: 10px;">Em⁷</div> | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">ii-V-I in E^b Major</div> <div style="margin-top: 10px;">Fm⁷</div> |
|  | |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">ii-V-I in A Major</div> <div style="margin-top: 10px;">9 Amaj⁷</div> | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">ii-V-I in B Major</div> |
|  | |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">ii-V-I in () Major</div> <div style="margin-top: 10px;">17 D⁷ Gmaj⁷</div> | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">ii-V-I in () Major</div> <div style="margin-top: 10px;">Bbm⁷ Eb⁷</div> |
|  | |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">ii-V-I in () Major</div> <div style="margin-top: 10px;">25 Cm⁷</div> | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">ii-V-I in () Major</div> <div style="margin-top: 10px;">B⁷</div> |
|  | |

For this unit, practice the ii-V-I exercises on the following page. These two examples are the same exercise, but because they move in whole steps, each one only includes six of the twelve keys. In these exercises, after each ii-V-I, the third and seventh of the major I chord are lowered to transform the chord from a major seventh chord into a minor seventh chord. The minor seventh chord then becomes the ii chord of the next ii-V-I progression.

Note that when the chords get so low that they become muddy on the piano, the chords are written an octave higher to avoid that lower, growly sound. Practice with the metronome, challenging yourself to go faster and faster.

A

ii-V-I in C Major

ii-V-I in B^b Major



ii-V-I in A^b Major

ii-V-I in G^b Major



ii-V-I in E Major

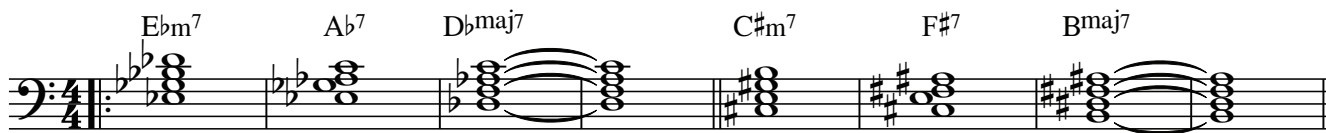
ii-V-I in D Major



B

ii-V-I in D^b Major

ii-V-I in B Major



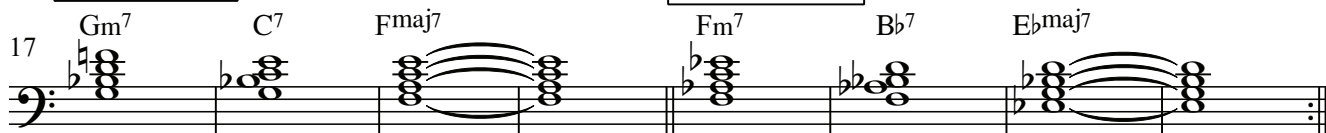
ii-V-I in A Major

ii-V-I in G Major



ii-V-I in F Major

ii-V-I in E^b Major



Circle ii-V-I's in the piece below. Then, put a square around any ii-V progressions without a I chord. These progressions are common too! Be careful – ii chords must always be minor seventh chords, V chords must always be dominant seventh chords, and I chords must always be major seventh chords. There are nine full ii-V-I progressions and seven ii-V progressions with no I chord.

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷ A⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷ Em⁷ A⁷

9 Dmaj⁷ G⁷ F#m⁷ B⁷ Emaj⁷ Em⁷ A⁷ Em⁷ A⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷

17 Cmaj⁷ C#m⁷ F#⁷ Bmaj⁷ Em⁷ A⁷ Em⁷ A⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷

25 Cmaj⁷ Bbm⁷ Eb⁷ Abmaj⁷ Db⁷ Cm⁷ F⁷ C#m⁷ F#⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

Now, go through the following pieces in *The Real Book*, searching for ii-V-I's or the components of ii-V-I's.

- Afternoon in Paris
- All the Things You Are
- Broadway
- Central Park West
- Darn that Dream
- Here's that Rainy Day
- Lady Bird
- Misty
- Stompin' at the Savoy
- Tune Up

Choose two of these pieces to practice, paying special attention to playing the ii-V-I's correctly, alternating between root position and second inversion chords.

Coordination Exercise 3

For this unit, practice your swung eighth notes with the ii-V-I progression played in the left hand in Charleston rhythm. Notice that you will play the major scale of the I chord for the entire ii-V-I progression. Don't forget to swing your eighth notes with good articulation!



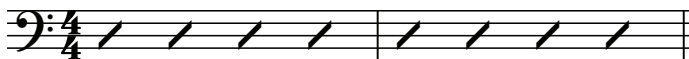
ii-V-I Licks

A **lick** is a short musical phrase. Jazz musicians usually learn licks in all twelve keys. **ii-V-I licks**, short phrases to play over the ii-V-I progression, are a staple of most jazz musicians' practice routines because there are so widely applicable.

ii-V-I licks are divided into two types based on harmonic rhythm. A **short-form ii-V-I** has ii and V chords that last for two beats each and a I chord that lasts for four beats. A **long-form ii-V-I** has ii and V chords that last for four beats each and a I chord that lasts for eight beats. A short-form ii-V-I lasts for a total of two measures. A long-form ii-V-I lasts for a total of four measures.

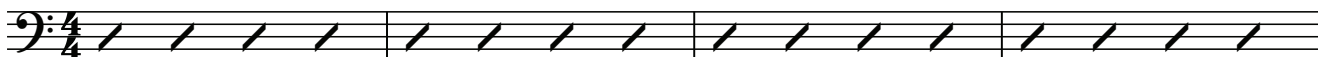
Short-Form ii-V-I in C

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷



Long-Form ii-V-I in C

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷



When practicing a lick, you should do four things:

1. Determine the correct swing articulation for the lick and practice accordingly.
2. Practice coordinating the lick in the right hand with comping patterns in the left hand.
3. Transpose the lick. Ultimately, you want to learn all licks in all twelve keys. However, depending on your experience, it may take a while to gain comfort with transposition. Practice the transposition to your comfort level, maybe starting with one key per day at first.
4. Apply the lick. Find places to intentionally play the lick in pieces that you are practicing. Be sure to note whether the lick is intended for a short-form or long-form ii-V-I and apply accordingly. Practice improvising before and after the lick to prepare to use it in a real improvised solo.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *Where do licks come from?*

A: It is a simple-sounding question, but the answer is complex.

Many musicians learn licks from books or from social media. Historically, jazz musicians learned licks from other musicians, either through mentorship, friendship, or by studying their recordings (this is part of what we mean when we say that jazz is an aural tradition). In due time, I will be prompting you to take your own ii-V-I licks from recordings, but until you are ready, I will be supplying you with a steady diet of ii-V-I licks.

Q: *I had a teacher say to me that learning licks was a waste of time because it prevents me from really improvising “on the spot.” He said that the great jazz musicians don’t use licks.*

A: I totally understand this perspective and I would agree with your teacher that the greatest poets of the music did so much more than playing licks they had memorized and transposed.

I look at it this way: think of learning a lick as being equivalent to learning a “set phrase” in a foreign language. Learning to rattle off “Hello, how are you?” or “Where is the bathroom?” without thinking is very useful. These set phrases are a chance to internalize grammar, practice details of correct pronunciation, and solidify elements of the language deep in your subconscious. Learning phrases like this is an important strategy for mastering a language.

That said, one doesn’t expect to find “Hello, how are you?” or similar standard phrases in the works of the great novelists and poets. The question is hardly original or profound. But do all poets know how to say these phrases in their native tongue? Of course! Like these masters, you must first become fluent in jazz before ascending to the level of artist or poet.

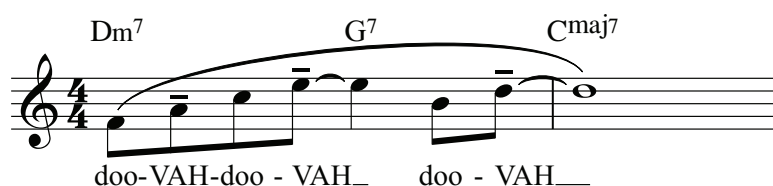
ii-V-I Lick 1

For the first ii-V-I lick, you will be guided through each of the four steps.

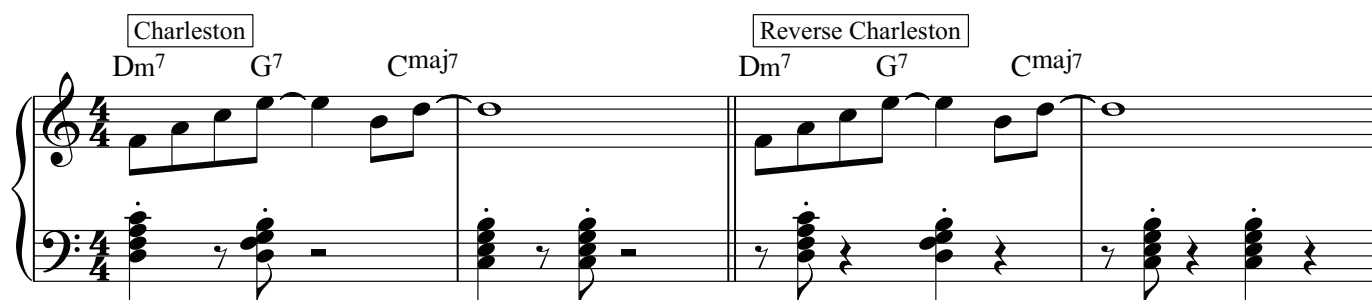
Here is ii-V-I Lick 1, written in C major:



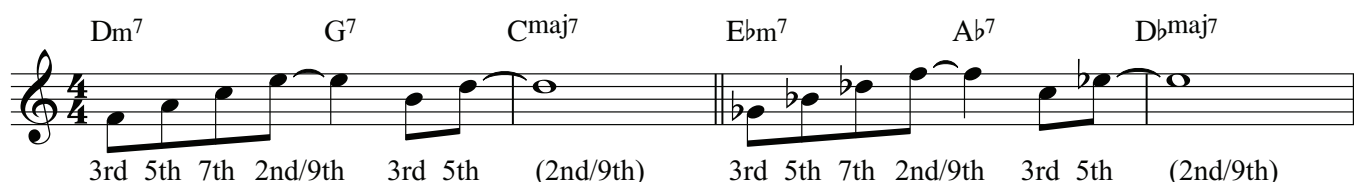
1. Determine the best swing articulation and practice swinging the lick. On the next page, you will find the lick with articulation and scat syllables. Be sure to practice exaggerating this articulation and thinking about the three-part subdivision of the beat while playing.



2. Practice with the Charleston and Reverse Charleston in the left hand. Remember to play the left hand short and maintain your exaggerated swing articulation in the right hand. Don't forget to anticipate the chord on beat three when playing the Charleston.



3. Transpose the lick. There are many ways to transpose. Here are the most common:
- Transpose each note individually. For instance, if you want to transpose the lick up a half step, to the key of D-flat, transpose each note of the original lick up a half step. A half step above F is G-flat. A half step above A is B-flat, etc.
 - Determine the relationship of each note to the chord. Is the note the third of the chord? The fifth? The root? Then, replicate these chord tones for the chords in the new key.



c.

Find the starting pitch by using one of the strategies above. Then, determine the intervals between the notes of the original lick. For instance, from F to A is a major third. From A to C is a minor third. Replicate this interval pattern in the new key.

Feel free to combine these three strategies in any way that is useful to you. Bear in mind that transposition can be very slow at first but will get faster and faster with more practice.

4. Practice applying the lick. First, determine whether the lick is for a short-form or long-form ii-V-I. Because ii-V-I Lick 1 has two beats each for the ii and V chords, it is a short-form ii-V-I lick. Where should the lick go in the following chord progression? Here, the slash notation indicates melodic improvisation, with each slash indicating a quarter note.

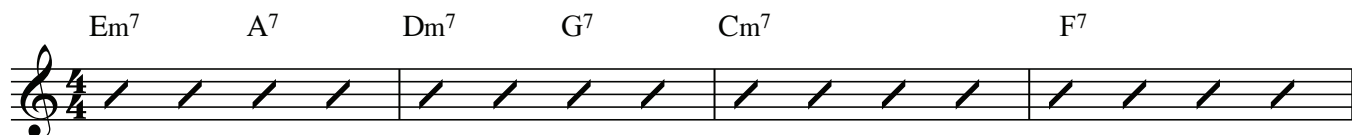


Even though the first two measures use a ii-V progression, the lick fits best in measures three and four because the harmony in these measures is a short-form ii-V-I. In the example below, the ii-V-I lick is written in the correct key.

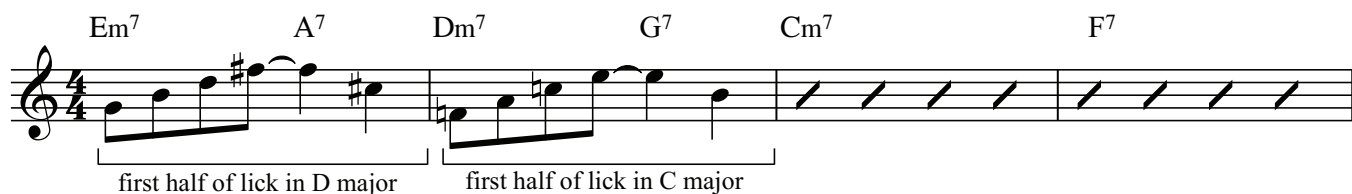


Practice playing just the lick where appropriate, then practice improvising leading into the lick and coming out of it.

Can the lick fit in the example below?



There are no full ii-V-I progressions here, only ii-V progressions without the I chord. The full lick won't work here, because the portion that fits with the I chord doesn't fit with the harmony of this tune. However, you can still practice playing the lick with this progression. Practice using only the first measure of the lick, the part that corresponds with the ii and V chords, as demonstrated below.



FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *In the example above, how can you know to use the lick in D major and C major?*

A: You have to determine what the I chord *would* be for each ii-V progression. In other words, ask yourself, *In what key is E the second scale degree and A the fifth scale degree?* The answer is D major. Then ask yourself, *In what key is D the second scale degree and G the fifth scale degree?* The answer is C major.

Q: *Can short-form ii-V-I licks be doubled to create a long-form ii-V-I lick and vice versa?*

A: Not really. Besides having notes that work really well, each lick has a rhythmic fingerprint. Remember how differently we articulate eighth notes and quarter notes? If you double the notes, the rhythmic intent changes and the lick will no longer sound stylistically appropriate.

GUIDED LISTENING 3 –

“I Want More” by Dexter Gordon



“I Want More” is the third track from Dexter Gordon’s 1962 album, *Dexter Calling...* The piece was composed by Gordon.

Dexter Gordon (1923-1990) was an American tenor saxophonist known for playing in the bebop and hardbop styles. Besides being a skilled melodist, Gordon is known for his suave sense of style, his impressive stature (about 6’6”), and his magnetic charisma. With this unique skillset, it should be no surprise he was cast in the lead role for a movie, *Round Midnight*, for which he was nominated for an Academy Award. The movie, about an aging jazz musician in Paris, is loosely based on the life of pianist Bud Powell. Besides being a style icon, Gordon was a great student of the Great American Songbook and was known for reciting the lyrics of a piece for the audience before performing the piece. Gordon was also known for using **quotes**, snippets of other songs placed into an improvised solo to create a sort of musical collage.

It is useful to understand a little bit about some of the most important styles of jazz so that you can begin to place artists in different categories. **Bebop** is a style developed by Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell, Thelonious Monk, and others in the 1940s and 1950s. Bebop was a reaction against musicians’ deference to audiences and corporate interests in the **Swing Era** in which musicians strived to make hits by playing music designed for dancing and singing. In the Swing Era (think 1920s and 1930s), musicians generally played pieces with medium or slow tempos and highlighted songs designed to be repetitive, melodic, and catchy. The musicians of the bebop era put the focus on individual expression, playing complex pieces at fast tempos with ample opportunity for improvisation. Although bebop is now a widely-accepted musical style, at the time it was an act of rebellion, meant to freak out the “squares.” **Hardbop** was a reaction to bebop in the 1950s and 1960s, which retained much of the richness of the bebop language but incorporated more gospel and blues-based melodies to make the music more appealing and accessible to audiences.

PERSONNEL

Dexter Gordon, tenor saxophone

Kenny Drew, piano

Paul Chambers, bass

Philly Joe Jones, drums

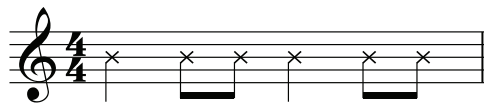
Form

- 0:00-0:09 Introduction
- 0:09-0:50 Head In
- 0:50-2:56 Saxophone Solo (3 choruses)
- 2:56-4:19 Piano Solo (2 choruses)
- 4:19-5:01 Head Out
- 5:01-end Outro (same material as Introduction)

It is now a good time to discuss the function of the various rhythm section instruments. Jazz typically uses the **upright bass** as its lowest voice. The main job of the bass is to establish the root of the chord and play on the strong beats of the measure. The bass is generally the least syncopated instrument in the jazz ensemble.

There are two main styles of bass playing in 4/4 swing. For **bass in two**, the bassist plays half notes, dividing the measure into two parts. For **bass in four** or **walking bass**, the bassist plays quarter notes, dividing the measure into four parts. Pianists can usually play both of these styles with their left hands, as the bass role often falls to the pianist in an ensemble without a bassist. On the track “I Want More,” bassist George Tucker plays walking bass for the entire track. Listen once through focusing on the basslines.

The **drumset** is a composite instrument, made from many different parts. As discussed in Unit 2, the **hi-hat**, a foot-activated contraption in which two cymbals face one another, is the most predictable part of the drumset. It plays on beats two and four of a 4/4 measure. The **ride cymbal** is the heart of a drummer’s swing beat. The most typical **ride cymbal pattern** is given below. Great drummers might play this pattern literally or create their own improvised variations, developing the pattern as a piece progresses.



The **snare drum** has a long tradition of virtuosic playing in both classical music and marching band music. In swing music, the snare drum is generally used for comping. Just like the piano comps, the snare drum is used to play rhythmic commentary without a set pattern, responding to the other musicians. If you listen closely, you can often hear the snare drum comping in conversation with the piano comping. During the head, notice how drummer Al Harewood matches some syncopated portions of the melody with snare drum comping.

The **bass drum**, which is played with a foot-activated pedal, is usually the least audible component of the drumset. Sometimes, drummers **feather** the bass drum by playing it very lightly on all four beats to subtly support the rhythm. Other times, drummers use the bass drum to comp, having conversations or playing complex figures between the bass and snare drums.

As you listen to “I Want More,” focus on the walking bass and then each component of the drum set, particularly the ride cymbal pattern, the hi-hat on two and four, and the snare drum comping. You will be hard-pressed to pick out too much bass drum in this track.

GUIDED LISTENING 3 – (CONTINUED)

“I Want More” is a great track for practicing aurally identifying the ii-V-I progression. After an eight-measure introduction, the form of the tune starts with a series of long-form ii-V-I’s. The chord progression is provided below.

Circle the ii-V-I and ii-V progressions that you find on the lead sheet below. As you listen, strive to hear the chord progression underneath the main melody and the solos. Practice playing and/or singing the roots of the chords during the head and solos. Can you comp your ii-V-I’s along with the recording?

The lead sheet for "I Want More" is written in B-flat major (three flats) and 4/4 time. It consists of six lines of music, each containing four measures of a ii-V-I progression. The chords are written above the staff, and the melody is represented by a treble clef with a key signature of three flats and a 4/4 time signature. The first measure of each line is marked with a repeat sign and a double bar line.

Line 1: Bbm⁷ Eb⁷ Abmaj⁷

Line 2: Ebm⁷ Ab⁷ Dbmaj⁷

Line 3: Dm⁷ G⁷ Cm⁷ F⁷

Line 4: Bbm⁷ Eb⁷ Abmaj⁷ (1. ending)

Line 5: Dm⁷ G⁷ Cm⁷ F⁷

Line 6: Bbm⁷ Eb⁷ Abmaj⁷ (2. ending)

UNIT 3 ASSIGNMENTS

1. Improvisation Exercise 3 – Drone Improvisation in F and B-flat

- a. Grace notes
- b. Sequences

2. ii-V-I Practice

- a. Written practice
- b. Pattern descending by whole steps
- c. Two Real Book tunes

3. Practice Coordination Exercise 3 in all twelve keys

4. ii-V-I Lick 1

- a. Learn the lick with good articulation
- b. Practice coordination with comping patterns
- c. Transpose to all twelve keys (or as many as possible)
- d. Apply to your two Real Book tunes

5. Guided Listening: “I Want More” by Dexter Gordon

- a. Listen at least twenty times
- b. Listen five times focusing on the ii-V-I's
- c. Listen five times focusing on hearing the bass and drumset

Unit 4

Going Deeper with ii-V-I



Scan Here for
Unit 4 Videos

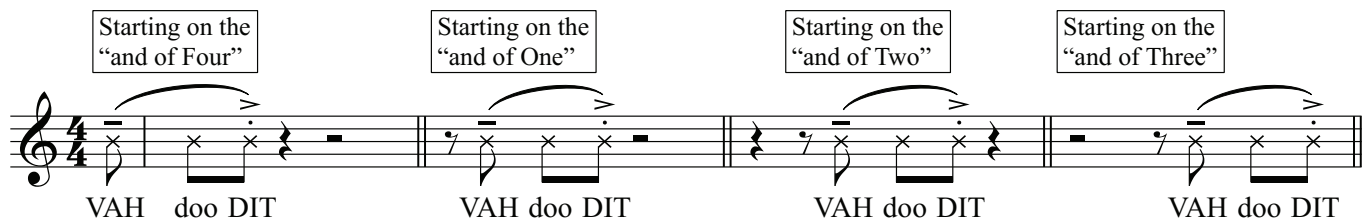
Improvisation Exercise 4 – Building Rhythmic Vocabulary 1

Starting this week, practice swinging your drone improvisations. As before, stay on one chord and one major scale, but now instead of holding the open fifth in a meditative drone, play it nice and short on all four beats to keep the time and imply a swing feel.



This week's improvisation exercise focuses on rhythm. Improvisers new to jazz improvisation are usually very stressed about their note choices. Justifiably so! Hitting a wrong note is immediately identifiable. However, playing with stylistically appropriate rhythms for a swing style is just as important to a successful jazz improvisation. Given the complexities of swing articulation, you probably need to work intentionally to build a vocabulary of swing rhythms for improvisation.

For now, you should focus on rhythms that start and end on offbeats. **Rhythm 1** is a three-note phrase consisting of three eighth notes. The articulation should sound like the mnemonic “VAH-doo-DIT” with the last note receiving a percussive accent. The rhythm could start on any of the four offbeats of a 4/4 measure.

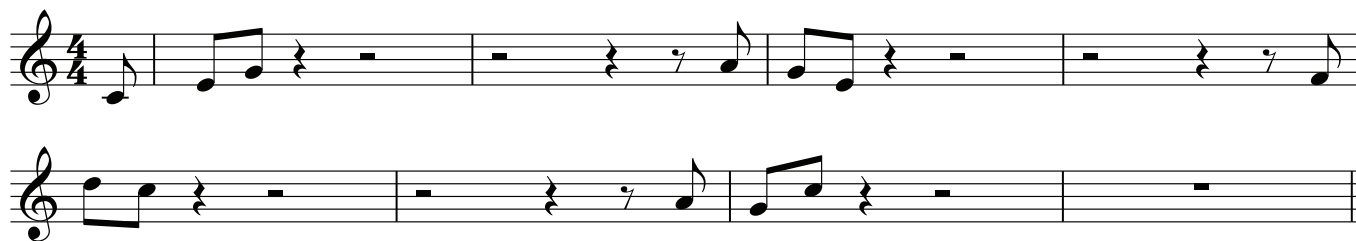


Remember that rhythm and **shape** are entirely different issues. Practice creating different shapes from this simple rhythm. The three notes could ascend, they could descend, they could make a “V” shape, a “Λ” shape, or they could move by leaps, steps, or any combination. Below are some of the many shapes one could make from this three-note rhythm.

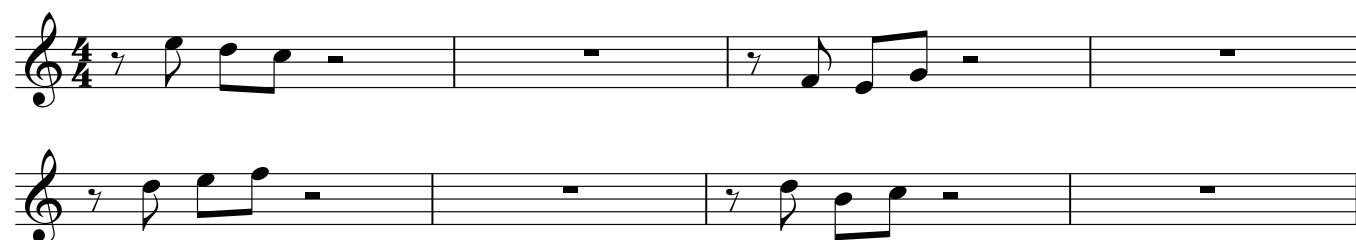


Practice Rhythm 1 as described below:

1. Practice for five minutes straight starting each three-note phrase on the “and of four” every two measures.



2. Practice for five minutes straight starting each three-note phrase on the “and of one” every two measures.



3. Practice for five minutes straight alternating between playing a phrase on the “and of four” and a phrase on the “and of one.”



4. Repeat steps one through three with phrases starting on the “and of two” and “and of three.”
5. Experiment with mixing phrases starting from all four possible offbeats.

All the while, check in to ask yourself:

- Is my articulation correct?
- Am I playing with a variety of shapes?

ii-V-I Practice

Each week, you will be practicing your ii-V-I's in a new way. This week, create flashcards with the name of the key center on the front. Write the correct notes for the three chords of the ii-V-I progression on the back.

Here's an example flashcard:

| Front: | Back: |
|--------|-------|
| | |

Using the flash cards:

- Quiz yourself, seeing how quickly you can find the correct chord.
- As you quiz yourself, sort your cards into two piles – one for keys you know well and one for keys you are still struggling with.
- Keep working on the flash cards for the difficult keys.
- If finding the chords is overwhelming at first, start with just three cards at a time. Master those three cards before moving on to the next three.

Scales and Modes for ii-V-I Progressions

Besides the practical advantages of practicing ii-V-I progressions, identifying and studying ii-V-I's is useful for finding notes for improvisation.

For a ii-V-I progression, an improviser can use the major scale of the I chord to improvise over the entire progression. Actually, you already practiced this concept in Coordination Exercise 3 in which you played the major scale for four measures while you comped with the chords of the ii-V-I progression in the left hand.

Here is a review of Coordination Exercise 3:

For naming purposes, jazz musicians often speak of this major scale as starting on each of the chords of the ii-V-I progression. When you start the major scale from notes other than the root, the new scales are called **modes**. In this book, the major scale that the mode is based on is referred to as the **parent scale**.

When a major scale starts on the second scale degree, it is called the **dorian mode**. Please note that modes are always named after the note they start on rather than the parent scale. When the C scale is played starting on D, it is called D Dorian. The dorian mode is generally what musicians use to improvise over a ii chord. To find any dorian mode without thinking about the parent scale, take the major scale of the first note (D major, two sharps, for D Dorian) and lower the third and the seventh notes.

When a major scale starts on the fifth scale degree, it is called the **mixolydian mode**. When the C scale is played starting on G, it is called G Mixolydian. The mixolydian mode is generally what musicians use to improvise over a V chord. To find any mixolydian mode without thinking about the parent scale, take the major scale of the first note (G major, one sharp, for G Mixolydian) and lower the seventh note.



Finally, a “normal” major scale, starting on the first scale degree, is known as the **ionian mode**. C Ionian is simply another name for a C major scale. Musicians use the ionian mode to improvise over I chords.

To review, you have learned two things that are equivalent:

1. When improvising over a ii-V-I progression, you can use the major scale of the I chord for all three chords of the progression.
2. For naming convenience, jazz musicians think of modes starting on the root of each chord. For a ii-V-I, use the dorian mode for the ii, mixolydian for the V, and ionian for the I. Even though it now seems like you need three different scales, these three modes all share the same parent scale, the major scale of the I chord.

There are two methods to find the correct notes of a mode:

1. Figure out the parent scale. Using the ii-V-I framework, determine the parent scale for each chord. Remember, in the context of a ii-V-I, a minor seventh chord is always a ii, a dominant seventh chord is always a V, and a major seventh chord is always a I. Then, start the scale from the root note of the appropriate chord.
2. Starting with the major scale of the root, alter the appropriate notes to form the mode.
 - a. To create a dorian mode, lower the third and seventh from the major scale of the root.
 - b. To create a mixolydian mode, lower just the seventh from the major scale of the root.
 - c. To create an ionian mode, no changes are needed.

These two methods will give you the same result. Which one you use is a matter of personal preference.

Look at the modes of the ii, V, and I in E-flat major below and practice using both of the methods presented to arrive at the same results.



Now, practice finding the modes as indicated below. In some examples, you are given the name of the mode. In others, you are given a chord symbol and you must choose the correct mode. Remember – dorian goes with minor seventh, mixolydian goes with dominant seventh, and ionian goes with major seventh.

| | | | |
|--|----------|-----------------------|--------------|
| | F Dorian | A ^b Dorian | A Mixolydian |
| | | | |

| | | | |
|---|----------|----------|---------------------------|
| 4 | G Ionian | B Dorian | B ^b Mixolydian |
| | | | |

| | | | |
|---|--------------|----------|-----------------------|
| 7 | C Mixolydian | D Ionian | E ^b Dorian |
| | | | |

| | | | |
|----|-----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 10 | Cm ⁷ | B ^b maj ⁷ | B ^b m ⁷ |
| | | | |

| | | | |
|----|----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| 13 | A ⁷ | C [#] ⁷ | Fmaj ⁷ |
| | | | |

| | | | |
|----|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| 16 | Em ⁷ | Fm ⁷ | A ^b ⁷ |
| | | | |

| | | | |
|----|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| 19 | Dmaj ⁷ | B ^b m ⁷ | Gm ⁷ |
| | | | |

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *Wait, what? The modes seem to make things so much more complicated! They hurt my brain! What's the point?*

A: Actually, once you get used to the modes, they make things much simpler. Think of all the steps you need to get from seeing a Gm7 to figuring out you should improvise using the F major scale. Once you master the modes, it is much more direct to see a Gm7 and determine to use the G Dorian mode.

Q: *Are there other modes than dorian, mixolydian, and ionian?*

A: Yes! Starting the major scale from any different note will create a new mode. Other scales also have their own modes if you start from different notes. The modes of the melodic minor scale are actually very important for advanced jazz improvisers. For now, mastering dorian, mixolydian, and ionian is the most important thing for your musical development.

Q: *If I'm improvising using the modes, does that mean I have to start with the first note of the mode?*

A: Absolutely not! The modes are merely a way of finding the set of notes that fit best with the chord. There is no expectation that you will start anywhere in particular.

Q: *Okay, so does this mean that for any minor seventh chord, I should improvise using the dorian mode and for any dominant seventh chord I should improvise using the mixolydian mode?*

A: Great question! You are on the right track. What you said is true-ish, but actually because chords can have different functions, it is not quite this simple. In major keys, the diatonic ii, vi, and iii chords are all minor seventh chords. Each one of these chords needs to be treated a little bit differently because they have different functions. Similarly, dominant seventh chords could be V chords, but they could also be chords with secondary dominant functions like V/V, V/vi, V/ii, etc. These chords all need to be treated a little bit differently as well.

At this point in your jazz development, these distinctions aren't important. As you progress as an improviser, we will explore more scales and modes that fit chords with different functionalities.

Coordination Exercise 4

For Coordination Exercise 4, practice playing the Reverse Charleston comping pattern in the left hand while playing each of the modes for the chords of the ii-V-I. There are two versions – ascending and descending. Transpose to all keys. If Coordination Exercise 4 is easy for you to play as written, practice mixing Reverse Charleston and Charleston comping patterns in the left hand.

A

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

B

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

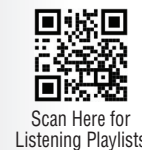
ii-V-I Lick 2

ii-V-I Lick 2 is a long-form ii-V-I lick designed to remind you of the parent scale for a ii-V-I progression. Remember the four stages of practicing a lick – determine the correct articulation, practice with comping patterns, transpose to all twelve keys, and apply the lick to tunes.

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

GUIDED LISTENING 4 –

“So What” by Miles Davis



Like “Freddie Freeloader,” “So What,” composed by Miles Davis, is a track from his 1959 album, *Kind of Blue*.

PERSONNEL

Miles Davis, trumpet

Cannonball Adderley, alto saxophone

John Coltrane, tenor saxophone

Bill Evans, piano

Paul Chambers, bass

Jimmy Cobb, drums

Form

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 0:00-0:33 | Introduction |
| 0:33-1:31 | Head (32 Measures, AABA) |
| 1:31-3:24 | Trumpet Solo (3 Choruses) |
| 3:24-5:15 | Tenor Saxophone Solo (2 Choruses) |
| 5:15-7:05 | Alto Saxophone Solo (2 Choruses) |
| 7:05-8:01 | Piano Solo (1 Chorus) |
| 8:01-8:55 | Bass Solo/Head Out (1 Chorus Combined) |

“So What” is a unique track for two main reasons. First, the melody is a call-and-response between the bass and the rest of the band. Miles Davis claims that he wrote the piece after having a conversation in a bar where his friend kept replying “so what” to anything he said. It is worth noting that Davis often fabricated this sort of thing, including claiming to write many songs that were actually written by his bandmates. Regardless of whether the story is true, one can easily imagine the bass embodying Davis’ role in the conversation and the responding chords reenacting his partner’s dismissive responses.

Second, there are only two chords – Dm7 and Ebm7. You know from this unit that the modes that match with these chords are D dorian and E-flat dorian. A stable, barely-moving harmonic approach is typical of music from the **modal jazz** era of the 1960s, which was largely initiated by *Kind of Blue*. In modal jazz, the traditional tension and release of V-I and ii-V-I progressions is replaced by colorful shifting chords without the clarity of dominant and tonic functions. Frequently, as in “So What,” the **harmonic rhythm**, that is, the rate of change of the harmony, is much slower in modal jazz than in previous eras of jazz. Because modal jazz works on such a different harmonic system than other types of jazz, pianists actually have a whole set of voicings specifically developed for modal jazz, which you will learn later.

Look at the lead sheet for “So What” in *The Real Book*. You will see that the piece starts with a repeated eight-measure section that stays on D minor, moves up a half step to E-flat minor for eight measures, and finally returns to D minor for eight measures.

“So What” is in **AABA form**, one of the most common forms for a jazz piece. In an AABA form, an eight-measure A section repeats twice at the beginning followed by a contrasting B section, commonly called the **bridge**. Then,

the A section is repeated to finish the piece. Each of the four sections is typically eight measures, for a total of thirty-two measures. The three A sections are usually identical with the exception of the endings, which can be slightly different. One unique element of this recording is found in the **backgrounds** for the piano solo. Backgrounds are chords played by horn players (trumpet/saxophone/trombone) behind another soloist. They can be preplanned or spontaneous.

It can be hard for musicians to keep track of where they are in the form on AABA tunes because the piece ends with an eight-measure A section and then repeats back to the beginning where two more A sections start the piece. Musicians need to be very vigilant to know whether they are on the **last A section**, the **first A section**, or the **second A section** at any given time. Practice following along with the form as you listen to “So What,” taking care not to get lost in the three consecutive A sections.

As you listen, notice how the personality of each horn player comes out in their solo. Davis sounds effortlessly cool and casual, relaxed and nonchalant. Davis is known for being able to say a lot without using many notes. John Coltrane’s solo is much more intense and virtuosic with flurries up and down the instrument. Cannonball Adderley conveys a sense of joy and lightness with his happy tone and his use of vocal techniques like pitch bend and vibrato.

UNIT 4 ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Improvisation Exercise 4 – practice three-note swing rhythm starting on each offbeat**
2. **ii-V-I Practice – flashcards**
3. **Written Practice on scales and modes**
4. **Coordination Exercise 4**
5. **Practice ii-V-I Lick 2**
6. **Choose two new Real Book tunes from the Tune Bank. Circle the ii-V-I’s, learn the chords, practice comping with the melody, and apply your ii-V-I licks where they fit.**
7. **Guided Listening: “So What” by Miles Davis**
 - a. Listen at least twenty times
 - b. Follow along the AABA form, until you can reliably predict where the bridge will come (listen for the change of chord)
 - c. Pay attention to the three horn solos, listening for the different personalities and thinking about how each musician conveys their own personality through their improvisation

Unit 5

Evening in Lyon



Scan Here for
Unit 5 Videos

Improvisation Exercise 5 – ii-V-I Improvisation

This week, practice improvising over ii-V-I progressions using the correct scales and modes. To match the piece you will be working on in this unit, practice improvising over ii-V-I progressions in C major, B-flat major, A-flat major, and B major.

When improvising over ii-V-I's, it is still important to listen intently to yourself (remember the very first improvisation prompt from Unit 1 – “Are you *really* listening to yourself as you play?”). Even though the notes of the scale belong to the same key center as the chord progression, each note has a different sound against each chord. Some notes are very tense and need resolution, most notably the fourth scale degree really wants to pull down towards the third on major and dominant chords. Activate your ear to tell you where notes want to resolve.

Practice improvising in three stages:

1. *Exploratory*. Play out of time, holding the three chords and making melodies freely above them.
2. *In time, swinging, long-form ii-V-I's*. Remember that a long-form ii-V-I holds the ii and V chords for four beats each and the I chord for eight beats. Hold the chords and put the metronome on beats two and four (usually half note = 60 beats per minute is a good place to start). Improvise with your best swing feel, perhaps using the rhythms you learned in the last unit.
3. *In time, swinging, short-form ii-V-I's*. Remember that a short-form ii-V-I holds the ii and V chords for two beats each and the I chord for four beats.

If you feel confident and creative improvising in these three stages, experiment with improvising while comping with Charleston and Reverse Charleston rhythms.

The image displays musical notation for two key signatures: C major and B-flat major. Each key signature has two examples of Long-Form and Short-Form ii-V-I progressions. The Long-Form progressions are written in 4/4 time, with the ii and V chords each lasting for four beats and the I chord lasting for eight beats. The Short-Form progressions are also in 4/4 time, with the ii and V chords each lasting for two beats and the I chord lasting for four beats. The chords are represented by block chords on a single staff.

Long-Form ii-V-I in C

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

Short-Form ii-V-I in C

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

Long-Form ii-V-I in B^b

Cm⁷ F⁷ B^bmaj⁷

Short-Form ii-V-I in B^b

Cm⁷ F⁷ B^bmaj⁷

| | |
|---|---|
| Long-Form ii-V-I in A ^b | Short-Form ii-V-I in A ^b |
| <p>B^bm⁷ E^b7 A^bmaj⁷</p> | <p>B^bm⁷ E^b7 A^bmaj⁷</p> |
| Long-Form ii-V-I in B | Short-Form ii-V-I in B |
| <p>C[#]m⁷ F[#]7 Bmaj⁷</p> | <p>C[#]m⁷ F[#]7 Bmaj⁷</p> |

ii-V-I Lick 3

ii-V-I Lick 3 is designed for a short-form ii-V-I. Notice the interesting shape created by the leap on the “and of three.” You will be applying it immediately in the piece for this unit.

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

Contrafacts & “Evening in Lyon”

A **contrafact** is a jazz piece created by writing a new melody based on the harmony of any existing chord progression. Interestingly, although melodies can be legally protected by copyright, chord progressions cannot. Anyone is free to borrow or steal any set of chords for their own tune. Besides the advantages created by this legal loophole, writing a contrafact is practical. Since experienced rhythm sections likely already know the chord changes to a jazz standard, if you play a melody instrument, you can easily debut your new tune at any jam session by telling the band to play the chords of the original tune while playing your new melody.

The musicians of the bebop era were masters of writing contrafacts. Saxophonist Charlie Parker wrote many famous contrafacts including “Donna Lee” (based on the chord changes of “Back Home Again in Indiana”), “Ornithology” (based on the chord changes of “How High the Moon”), and “Scrapple from the Apple” (based on the chord changes of “Honeysuckle Rose”), among many others. Later, you will learn about **rhythm changes**, a whole subgenre of jazz pieces based on the chord changes of George Gershwin’s piece “I Got Rhythm.”

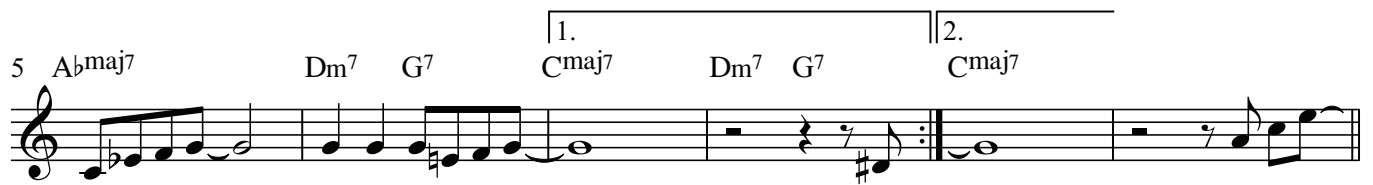
Sometimes, contrafacts are used to create inside jokes. Thelonious Monk wrote his famous tune “Evidence” over the chord changes of the piece “Just You, Just Me.” Apparently, Monk concluded that “just you” and “just me” combined makes “just us,” which sounds like “justice.” And what do you need to get “justice”? Evidence! Later, saxophonist Joshua Redman took the rhythms from Monk’s contrafact to create his own piece, which he entitled “Jazz Crimes.”

For this unit, you will learn a contrafact entitled “Evening in Lyon,” which is based on the John Lewis piece, “Afternoon in Paris.” Practicing “Evening in Lyon” will provide you with the chance to go through the process of learning a new tune from scratch and to review everything you have learned so far.

The lead sheet for “Evening in Lyon” appears on the following page.

Evening in Lyon

Jeremy Siskind



Approaching a New Tune

There is much to do when learning a new jazz piece like “Evening in Lyon.” Below is a list of steps you should take, listed in chronological order.

1. Determine the form.

In this case, the form is AABA, which you should recognize from the Guided Listening from Unit 4. The three identical A sections are eight measures each. The first two A sections start at the very beginning and end with the first and second ending. The last A section starts at measure 25. The B section (“bridge”), which begins at measure 17, is also eight measures long. Jazz charts typically surround the bridge of a piece with double barlines to help the musician easily recognize the form.

2. Play the melody with correct articulation in the right hand while holding the root of the chord in the left hand so that you can hear the harmony.

The first eight measures are presented below with swing articulation written below the melody and the root note held in the left hand. Continue practicing the rest of the piece using this format with the metronome on beats two and four. Don't hesitate to write in the swing articulation if necessary.

The musical score is written for piano and voice in 4/4 time. The piano part uses a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The vocal melody is written on a single staff with lyrics underneath. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4.

First System (Measures 1-4):

- Measure 1: Piano accompaniment starts with a half note C4 and a half note F#4. The vocal melody begins with a quarter note C4, followed by a quarter rest. Lyrics: "VAH".
- Measure 2: Piano accompaniment continues with a half note C4 and a half note F#4. The vocal melody has a quarter note C4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note G4. Lyrics: "doo VAH doo DIT".
- Measure 3: Piano accompaniment continues with a half note C4 and a half note F#4. The vocal melody has a quarter note C4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note G4. Lyrics: "VAH daht doo VAH doo DIT".
- Measure 4: Piano accompaniment continues with a half note C4 and a half note F#4. The vocal melody has a quarter note C4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note G4. Lyrics: "VAH".

Second System (Measures 5-8):

- Measure 5: Piano accompaniment continues with a half note C4 and a half note F#4. The vocal melody has a quarter note C4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note G4. Lyrics: "doo VAH doo DIT".
- Measure 6: Piano accompaniment continues with a half note C4 and a half note F#4. The vocal melody has a quarter note C4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note G4. Lyrics: "VAH daht doo VAH doo DIT".
- Measure 7: Piano accompaniment continues with a half note C4 and a half note F#4. The vocal melody has a quarter note C4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note G4. Lyrics: "VAH doo VAH doo VAH_".
- Measure 8: Piano accompaniment continues with a half note C4 and a half note F#4. The vocal melody has a quarter note C4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note G4. Lyrics: "VAH_".

Third System (Measures 9-12):

- Measure 9: Piano accompaniment continues with a half note C4 and a half note F#4. The vocal melody has a quarter note C4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note G4. Lyrics: "daht daht doo VAH doo VAH_".
- Measure 10: Piano accompaniment continues with a half note C4 and a half note F#4. The vocal melody has a quarter note C4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note G4. Lyrics: "daht daht doo VAH doo VAH_".
- Measure 11: Piano accompaniment continues with a half note C4 and a half note F#4. The vocal melody has a quarter note C4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note G4. Lyrics: "daht daht doo VAH doo VAH_".
- Measure 12: Piano accompaniment continues with a half note C4 and a half note F#4. The vocal melody has a quarter note C4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note G4. Lyrics: "VAH".

3. Identify any ii-V-I and ii-V progressions. Practice playing the chords with your left hand.

At this stage, if writing out the chords helps you to go faster, by all means write them out. Remember to play your ii-V-I progressions with smooth voice leading, alternating between root position and second inversion chords. Put the metronome on beats two and four and practice playing the melody in the right hand while holding chords in the left. The A section is written below. Continue playing the melody with good swing feel and articulation.

Chords for Exercise 3, A section:

- Measure 1: Cmaj7
- Measure 2: Cm7
- Measure 3: F7
- Measure 4: Bbmaj7
- Measure 5: Bbm7
- Measure 6: Eb7
- Measure 7: Abmaj7
- Measure 8: Dm7
- Measure 9: G7
- Measure 10: Cmaj7 (1st ending)
- Measure 11: Dm7
- Measure 12: G7

4. Coordinate the melody in the right hand with comping in the left hand.

Practice comping both the Charleston and Reverse Charleston patterns with the melody. Remember that you can write out the chords or use “x” notation to indicate where the chords match up with the melody. Below, you will find the first four measures with a Charleston comping pattern and then with a Reverse Charleston comping pattern. Remember that jazz musicians regularly anticipate chords when the comp arrives an eighth note before the chord changes.

Chords for Exercise 4:

- Measure 1: Cmaj7
- Measure 2: Cm7
- Measure 3: F7
- Measure 4: Bbmaj7
- Measure 5: Bbm7
- Measure 6: Eb7

5. Experiment with personalizing the melody using some of the devices outlined in Unit 2.

The example below shows one possible personalized version of the A section melody of “Evening in Lyon.” You will learn many more devices for melody personalization in the next section of Unit 5.

The musical score for the A section of "Evening in Lyon" is presented in two staves. The first staff contains measures 1 through 5, and the second staff contains measures 6 through 10. Chord symbols are placed above the staff: Cmaj7, Cm7, F7, Bbmaj7, Bbm7, Eb7, Abmaj7, Dm7, G7, Cmaj7, Dm7, and G7. The score includes several annotations for personalized melody devices: "grace note slide" (measures 1, 3, 5, 7, 9), "repeated note" (measure 2), "added syncopation" (measure 4), "repeated notes + grace note slides" (measures 6-8), and "grace note slide" (measures 10-11). A first ending bracket labeled "1." spans measures 9 and 10.

Personalizing a Melody 2

1. Add ghost notes.

Ghost notes are notes deemphasized to such a degree that they are nearly inaudible. Ghost notes are used to keep the time and emphasize swing feel. Think of ghost notes like the tiny hop a jump-roper takes between jumps to maintain their timing. Generally, ghost notes are played with the thumb. The root, third, or fifth of the chord is typically used for a ghost note. Ghost notes are rarely notated, but if they are, they are indicated either with an “x” notehead, or by placing parentheses around the note.

The musical score for the A section of "Evening in Lyon" is presented in two staves, identical to the previous example. Chord symbols are placed above the staff: Cmaj7, Cm7, F7, Bbmaj7, Bbm7, Eb7, Abmaj7, Dm7, G7, Cmaj7, Dm7, and G7. The score includes annotations for ghost notes: "ghost note" (measures 2, 4, 6, 8, 10) and "ghost notes" (measures 7-8). The ghost notes are indicated by parentheses around the noteheads. A first ending bracket labeled "1." spans measures 9 and 10.

2. Add octaves and double notes to emphasize important moments.

Octaves and double notes can be added above or below a melody note to provide extra emphasis. It is most common to use the root, third, or fifth of the chord as a double note. Double notes are often used in combination with a grace note slide.

The image shows two staves of music in treble clef. The first staff contains measures 1 through 4. Above the staff are chord symbols: Cmaj7, Cm7, F7, and Bbmaj7. Annotations with arrows point to specific notes: 'octave' points to the C4 note in measure 1; 'double note' points to the C5 note in measure 2; 'double note + grace note slide' points to the F5 note in measure 3; and another 'octave' points to the Bb4 note in measure 4. The second staff contains measures 5 through 8. Above the staff are chord symbols: Bbm7, Eb7, Abmaj7, Dm7, G7, Cmaj7, Dm7, and G7. Annotations with arrows point to: 'octave' for Bb4 in measure 5; 'double note' for Eb5 in measure 6; 'double note + grace note slide' for Ab5 in measure 7; and 'double notes forming a melodic line' for the D5 and G5 notes in measure 7. A bracket labeled '1.' spans measures 7 and 8.

Notice that in measures seven and eight, the double notes form a sort of melody, creating smooth voice leading by moving stepwise from C to B to A.

3. Add turns to decorate a descending or flat melody.

Turns provide a little bit of color and character to the melodic line. For a **descending turn**, ascend by a diatonic step and restate the original note before moving to the next note.

The image shows two staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff is labeled 'Original' and contains measures 1 through 3 with chord symbols Dm7, G7, and Cmaj7. The melody consists of quarter notes: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6, B6, C7. The second staff is labeled 'With Descending Turns' and contains measures 1 through 3 with the same chord symbols. The melody is decorated with descending turns. In measure 1, the notes are D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6, B6, C7. In measure 2, the notes are D5, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1, F1, E1, D1, C1, B0, A0, G0, F0, E0, D0, C0, B-1, A-1, G-1, F-1, E-1, D-1, C-1, B-2, A-2, G-2, F-2, E-2, D-2, C-2, B-3, A-3, G-3, F-3, E-3, D-3, C-3, B-4, A-4, G-4, F-4, E-4, D-4, C-4, B-5, A-5, G-5, F-5, E-5, D-5, C-5, B-6, A-6, G-6, F-6, E-6, D-6, C-6, B-7, A-7, G-7, F-7, E-7, D-7, C-7, B-8, A-8, G-8, F-8, E-8, D-8, C-8, B-9, A-9, G-9, F-9, E-9, D-9, C-9, B-10, A-10, G-10, F-10, E-10, D-10, C-10, B-11, A-11, G-11, F-11, E-11, D-11, C-11, B-12, A-12, G-12, F-12, E-12, D-12, C-12, B-13, A-13, G-13, F-13, E-13, D-13, C-13, B-14, A-14, G-14, F-14, E-14, D-14, C-14, B-15, A-15, G-15, F-15, E-15, D-15, C-15, B-16, A-16, G-16, F-16, E-16, D-16, C-16, B-17, A-17, G-17, F-17, E-17, D-17, C-17, B-18, A-18, G-18, F-18, E-18, D-18, C-18, B-19, A-19, G-19, F-19, E-19, D-19, C-19, B-20, A-20, G-20, F-20, E-20, D-20, C-20, B-21, A-21, G-21, F-21, E-21, D-21, C-21, B-22, 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G-196, F-196, E-196, D-196, C-196, B-197, A-197, G-197, F-197, E-197, D-197, C-197, B-198, A-198, G-198, F-198, E-198, D-198, C-198, B-199, A-199, G-199, F-199, E-199, D-199, C-199, B-200, A-200, G-200, F-200, E-200, D-200, C-200, B-201, A-201, G-201, F-201, E-201, D-201, C-201, B-202, A-202, G-202, F-202, E-202, D-202, C-202, B-203, A-203, G-203, F-203, E-203, D-203, C-203, B-204, A-204, G-204, F-204, E-204, D-204, C-204, B-205, A-205, G-205, F-205, E-205, D-205, C-205, B-206, A-206, G-206, F-206, E-206, D-206, C-206, B-207, A-207, G-207, F-207, E-207, D-207, C-207, B-208, A-208, G-208, F-208, E-208, D-208, C-208, B-209, A-209, G-209, F-209, E-209, D-209, C-209, B-210, A-210, G-210, F-210, E-210, D-210, C-210, B-211, A-211, G-211, F-211, E-211, D-211, C-211, B-212, A-212, G-212, F-212, E-212, D-212, C-212, B-213, A-213, G-213, F-213, E-213, D-213, C-213, B-214, A-214, G-214, F-214, E-214, D-214, C-214, B-215, A-215, G-215, F-215, E-215, D-215, C-215, B-216, A-216, G-216, F-216, E-216, 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E-257, D-257, C-257, B-258, A-258, G-258, F-258, E-258, D-258, C-258, B-259, A-259, G-259, F-259, E-259, D-259, C-259, B-260, A-260, G-260, F-260, E-260, D-260, C-260, B-261, A-261, G-261, F-261, E-261, D-261, C-261, B-262, A-262, G-262, F-262, E-262, D-262, C-262, B-263, A-263, G-263, F-263, E-263, D-263, C-263, B-264, A-264, G-264, F-264, E-264, D-264, C-264, B-265, A-265, G-265, F-265, E-265, D-265, C-265, B-266, A-266, G-266, F-266, E-266, D-266, C-266, B-267, A-267, G-267, F-267, E-267, D-267, C-267, B-268, A-268, G-268, F-268, E-268, D-268, C-268, B-269, A-269, G-269, F-269, E-269, D-269, C-269, B-270, A-270, G-270, F-270, E-270, D-270, C-270, B-271, A-271, G-271, F-271, E-271, D-271, C-271, B-272, A-272, G-272, F-272, E-272, D-272, C-272, B-273, A-273, G-273, F-273, E-273, D-273, C-273, B-274, A-274, G-274, F-274, E-274, D-274, C-274, B-275, A-275, G-275, F-275, E-275, D-275, C-275, B-276, A-276, G-276, F-276, E-276, D-276, C-276, B-277, A-277, G-277, F-277, E-277, D-277, C-277, B-278, A-278, G-278, F-278, E-278, D-278, C-278, B-279, A-279, G-279, F-279, E-279, D-279, C-279, B-280, A-280, G-280, F-280, E-280, D-280, C-280, B-281, A-281, G-281, F-281, E-281, D-281, C-281, B-282, A-282, G-282, F-282, E-282, D-282, C-282, B-283, A-283, G-283, F-283, E-283, D-283, C-283, B-284, A-284, G-284, F-284, E-284, D-284, C-284, B-285, A-285, G-285, F-285, E-285, D-285, C-285, B-286, A-286, G-286, F-286, E-286, D-286, C-286, B-287, A-287, G-287, F-287, E-287, D-287, C-287, B-288, A-288, G-288, F-288, E-288, D-288, C-

For a **flat turn**, add a half-step lower neighbor to the end of a descending turn to avoid repeating the main note twice in a row.

The image shows two musical staves in 4/4 time. The first staff, labeled 'Original', contains the notes D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5, with chords Dm7, G7, and Cmaj7 indicated above. The second staff, labeled 'With Flat Turns Added', shows the same melody but with flat turns (half-step lower neighbors) added to the descending turns between D4-E4-F4 and G4-A4-B4. Brackets labeled 'turn' are placed under these modified sections.

Notice how turns have been added to the melody of “Evening in Lyon” in the example below.

The image shows two musical staves in 4/4 time. The first staff shows the melody for 'Evening in Lyon' with chords Cmaj7, Cm7, F7, Bbmaj7, Bbm7, and Eb7 indicated above. Brackets labeled 'descending turn' are placed under the descending turns between Cm7 and F7, and between Bbm7 and Eb7. The second staff, starting with a measure number '5', shows the melody with chords Abmaj7, Dm7, G7, Cmaj7, Dm7, and G7 indicated above. A bracket labeled 'two “flat” turns' is placed under the descending turns between Dm7 and G7, and between Cmaj7 and Dm7. A first ending bracket labeled '1.' is shown above the final measures.

Improvising on “Evening in Lyon”

Now that you’ve gained some fluency with the melody and chords for “Evening in Lyon,” it is time to start working on improvising over the form.

1. First, determine which scales you will use to improvise over this piece. Since this tune is so full of ii-V-I progressions, it is useful to diagram the major key centers, as shown below.

Evening in Lyon

Jeremy Siskind

The diagram illustrates the major key centers and chord progressions for the piece "Evening in Lyon" across 32 measures. The key centers are indicated by brackets above the staff, and the specific chords are written below the staff.

Measures 1-4: C Major (Cmaj7, Cm7, F7, Bbmaj7), Bb Major (Bbm7, Eb7).

Measures 5-8: (Ab Major), C Major (1. Dm7, G7, Cmaj7; 2. Dm7, G7, Cmaj7).

Measures 17-20: C Major (Dm7, G7, Cmaj7, Am7).

Measures 21-24: C Major (Dm7, G7, C#m7, F#7), B Major (Dm7, G7).

Measures 25-28: (C Major), Bb Major (Cmaj7, Cm7, F7, Bbmaj7), Ab Major (Bbm7, Eb7).

Measures 29-32: (Ab Major), C Major (Dm7, G7, Cmaj7, (Dm7, G7)).

2. Next, practice the scales in rhythm to get a sense of where the harmonies change. Practice the scales for each key center in rhythm while comping with your left hand. This should feel familiar from your Coordination Exercises. The A section is notated for you, but practice the bridge as well, writing the scales out, if necessary.

Cmaj7 Cm7 F7

3 Bbmaj7 Bbm7 Eb7 Abmaj7

6 Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 Dm7 G7

3. If you find this exercise useful, there are lots of possible variations. Letter A shows the scales in descending rather than ascending form. Letter B shows the scales being played in their “mode” forms, that is, starting on the root of each chord. Note that, as the harmony moves two times per measure, you will only be able to play four notes of each scale. Generally, in this case, jazz musicians choose to play the root, second, third, and fifth of the scale, as the fourth is an unresolved place to end. Letter C shows the scales alternating directions, with stepwise connections between them.

A

Exercise A shows descending scales for five chords: Cmaj7, Cm7, F7, Bbmaj7, Bbm7, and Eb7. The notation is in 4/4 time, with the right hand playing a descending eighth-note scale and the left hand playing a static chord.

B

Exercise B shows scales in their “mode” forms for five chords: Cmaj7, Cm7, F7, Bbmaj7, Bbm7, and Eb7. The notation is in 4/4 time, with the right hand playing an ascending eighth-note scale and the left hand playing a static chord.

C

Exercise C shows scales alternating directions for five chords: Cmaj7, Cm7, F7, Bbmaj7, Bbm7, and Eb7. The notation is in 4/4 time, with the right hand playing an ascending eighth-note scale and the left hand playing a static chord.

4. Once you feel comfortable and confident with the scales for each key center, it is time to dive in and improvise over this form. Using a metronome on beats two and four, hold the left-hand chords and create some melodies using the scales in rhythm.

Force yourself to complete a thirty-two-measure improvisation even if what you are doing seems “bad” or “boring.” If you get lost, attempt to continue and get back on track. You have to make a mess first in order to clean it up. It will take time to get comfortable and to craft your improvisation into something truly artful. Once you have found your bearings, shift your focus to each of the improvisation prompts you focused on for the first few units. Play a thirty-two measure solo while focusing on each prompt individually:

- Are you listening to yourself?
- Are you playing phrases with clear beginnings and endings?
- Are you using rhythmic variety?
- Are you using a variety of hand positions including crossing over and crossing under and spreading out your hand for large intervals?
- Can you improvise in a call-and-response format?
- Are you using grace note slides to simulate pitch bends?
- Are you using repetition or sequences?
- Are you swinging?
- Can you incorporate Rhythm No. 1 in your solo?

It might seem a little weird, but spending time improvising while shifting your focus is really good practice. By staying focused, you will build new positive musical habits that allow you to focus on increasingly complex and interesting concepts. The key is that the practice must be focused. Without focus, you are only reinforcing your bad habits, the opposite of effective practicing!

5. In order to practice incorporating licks into “Evening in Lyon,” you will **script a solo**. Scripting a solo means planning out certain parts of the solo while leaving other parts open for improvisation. When scripting a solo, use a lick about once every four measures, aiming for variety. Remember to distinguish between short-form ii-V-I licks and long-form ii-V-I licks and be sure to transpose the licks into the correct keys for the ii-V-I’s.

A sample script for “Evening in Lyon” is given on the next page. Since the first and second A sections will be scripted differently, the solo script is no longer written with a first and second ending. The slashes indicate time to improvise, with each slash representing a quarter note.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *What do I do with the A minor seventh chord in the fourth measure of the bridge? It’s not part of any ii-V-I’s that I can see.*

A: Good observation! Here, the A minor seventh chord is functioning as the vi chord of C major. Because the chord is diatonic in C, you can improvise using the C major scale.

Although an A minor seventh chord often functions as the ii chord in G major, because there are no other chords from G major in the surrounding area, we can be confident this chord belongs to the key of C in this context.

ii-V-I Lick 1 (in B \flat)

Cmaj7 Cm7 F7 B \flat maj7 B \flat m7 Eb7

ii-V-I Lick 3 (in C)

5 A \flat maj7 Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 Dm7 G7

ii-V-I Lick 3 (in A \flat)

9 Cmaj7 Cm7 F7 B \flat maj7 B \flat m7 Eb7

13 A \flat maj7 Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 Dm7 G7

ii-V-I Lick 2 (in C)

17 Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 Am7

ii-V-I Lick 1 (in B) ii-V-I Lick 1 (in C)

21 Dm7 G7 C \sharp m7 F \sharp 7 Dm7 G7

ii-V-I Lick 3 (in B \flat)

25 Cmaj7 Cm7 F7 B \flat maj7 B \flat m7 Eb7

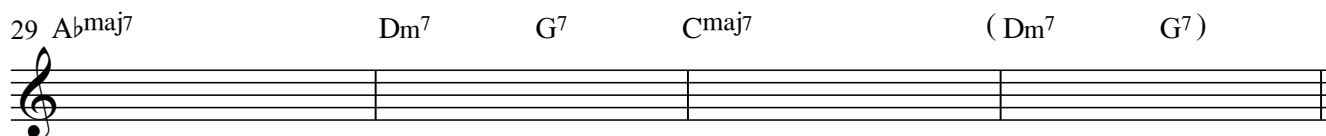
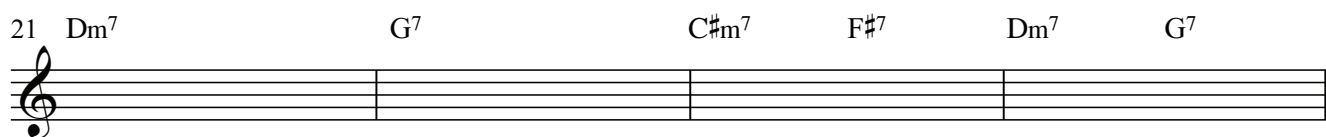
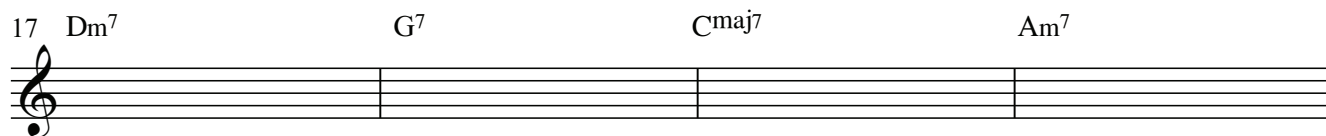
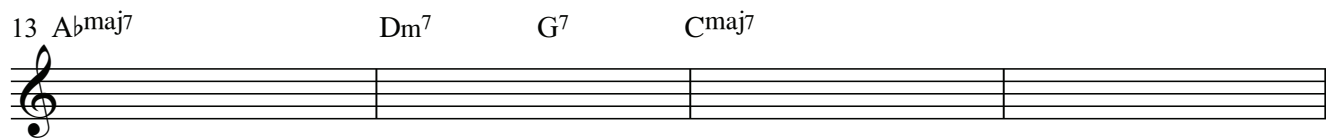
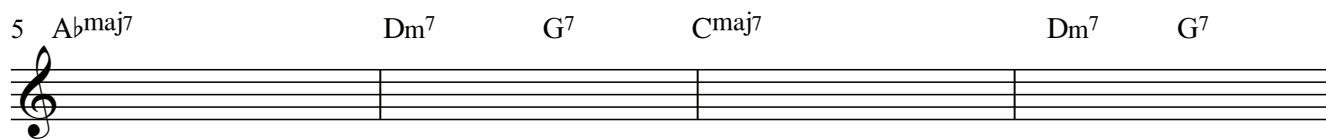
ii-V-I Lick 3 (in C)

29 A \flat maj7 Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 (Dm7 G7)

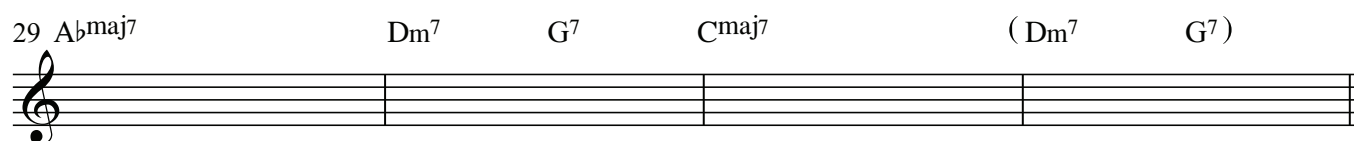
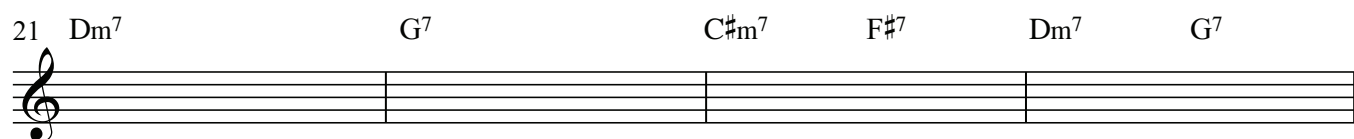
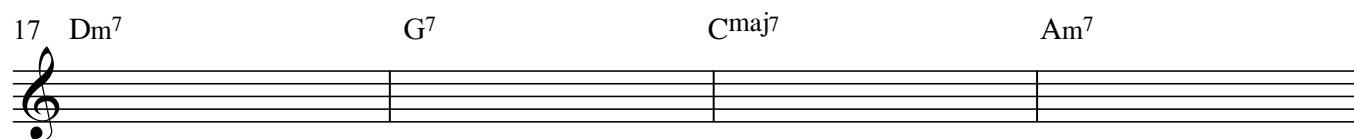
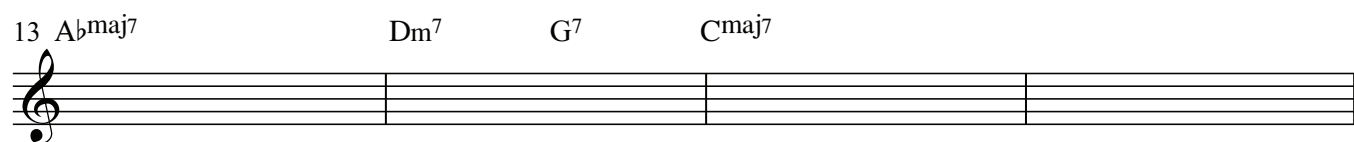
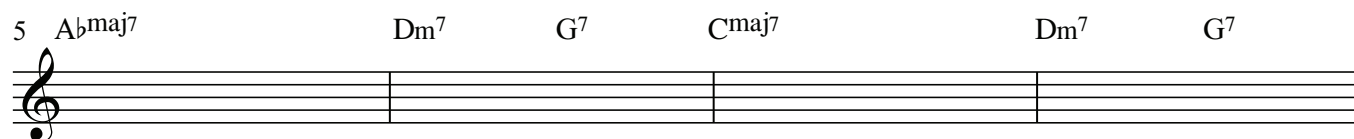
As you learn more and more licks, you will be able to create more and more complex and varied scripts. For now, make two different scripts and practice them until you can smoothly incorporate the licks into your improvisation.

The blank staff paper below is provided for you to write your solo scripts.

Evening in Lyon - Solo Script 1



Evening in Lyon - Solo Script 2



6. Your last assignment for this unit is to compose a dream solo on the chord changes of “Evening in Lyon.” A **dream solo** is a written-out “improvisation” that represents how you would want to improvise if you had unlimited time to stop and think about your solo.

If you think about it, practicing a dream solo makes perfect sense. As you are still learning, it can seem impossibly hard to both invent and perform a coherent improvisation in rhythm. In your learning stages, it is useful to separate out the inventing and performing stages. Take some time to invent a solo that you are proud of. Then, learn to play it with fluency and great swing articulation. Finally, combine the perfect right-hand solo with comping in the left hand, practicing your composition with the same focus you would give to a classical piece.

Feel free to incorporate ii-V-I Licks 1, 2, and 3 into your dream solo. As you are writing, check whether your solo is fulfilling the focus prompts listed on page 72. Remember that rests are equally important as notes and should be included in your dream solo.

The blank staff paper on the next page is provided for you to write both the right and left hands of your dream solo. Happy composing!

Evening in Lyon - Dream Solo

Chord progression for measures 1-4:

Measures: 1 2 3 4

Chords: Cmaj7 Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7 Bbm7 Eb7

A musical staff in 4/4 time, spanning four measures. The staff is empty, with only the treble and bass clefs and the 4/4 time signature visible. The measures are separated by vertical bar lines.

Chord progression for measures 5-8:

Measures: 5 6 7 8

Chords: Abmaj7 Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 Dm7 G7

A musical staff in 4/4 time, spanning four measures. The staff is empty, with only the treble and bass clefs and the 4/4 time signature visible. The measures are separated by vertical bar lines.

Chord progression for measures 9-12:

Measures: 9 10 11 12

Chords: Cmaj7 Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7 Bbm7 Eb7

A musical staff in 4/4 time, spanning four measures. The staff is empty, with only the treble and bass clefs and the 4/4 time signature visible. The measures are separated by vertical bar lines.

Chord progression for measures 13-16:

Measures: 13 14 15 16

Chords: Abmaj7 Dm7 G7 Cmaj7

A musical staff in 4/4 time, spanning four measures. The staff is empty, with only the treble and bass clefs and the 4/4 time signature visible. The measures are separated by vertical bar lines.

17 Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷ Am⁷

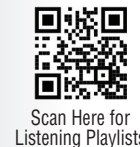
21 Dm⁷ G⁷ C#m⁷ F#⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷

25 Cmaj⁷ Cm⁷ F⁷ Bbmaj⁷ Bbm⁷ Eb⁷

29 Abmaj⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷ (Dm⁷ G⁷)

GUIDED LISTENING 5 –

“An Afternoon in Paris” by Kenny Barron



“An Afternoon in Paris,” composed by John Lewis, is the sixth track from Kenny Barron’s 1991 album, *Invitation*.

Remember that “Evening in Lyon” is a contrafact based on the chords of a piece called “Afternoon in Paris” by John Lewis. Since you are now accustomed to the changes, it will be instructive to listen to a version of this piece by a quartet led by the great pianist Kenny Barron.

Kenny Barron (1943-) is a pianist from Philadelphia who is strongly associated with the bebop style. His first important gig was playing with Dizzy Gillespie, a trumpet player who is one of the originators of bebop. Barron’s multi-decade career has been diverse and wide ranging, including touring with saxophone legend Stan Getz (more on him later) and leading the Classical Jazz Quartet, a group that interprets classical repertoire in jazz styles.

PERFORMERS

Ralph Moore, saxophone

Kenny Barron, piano

David Williams, bass

Lewis Nash, drums

Form

0:00-0:47 Head In (32 measures, AABA)

0:47-2:18 Bass Solo (2 choruses)

2:18-3:55 Saxophone Solo (2 choruses)

3:55-5:30 Piano Solo (2 choruses)

5:30-6:19 Trading Fours (1 chorus)

6:19-7:06 Head Out

7:06-7:19 Ending

By now, you should recognize much of what you hear in Kenny Barron’s “An Afternoon in Paris.” (This tune is usually titled simply “Afternoon in Paris,” but Barron’s recording adds “An” to the beginning). The sandwich form is very typical, except that the bass takes the first solo instead of being relegated to the typical role of last soloist. You might also recognize that the bass sound is a little bit different than what you have previously heard. Bassist David Williams subscribes to a sonic template of a more treble-heavy bass sound that came to prominence in the 1980s and 1990s. The sound allows the listener to hear more of the pitch of the bass but gives less bottom end and less emphasis on the attack of each note.

You should also hear that instead of playing each of the chords of the bridge, the band chooses to interpret the bridge with a pedal point, with the bass staying on a G instead of moving. A few times throughout this recording, for instance at 4:00-4:05, 4:25-4:30 and 4:58-5:50, you can hear Barron playing with a **double-time feel**, using sixteenth notes rather than eighth notes as his main rhythmic unit. You can also hear Barron cleverly inserting a quotation of the piece “Four,” which is most closely associated with Miles Davis, at 5:08-5:12. Listen to the melody of “Four” and then go back to Barron’s solo to see if you can hear the quotation.

Listen also for the way that Barron gives his melodies a vocal character. You can hear grace notes (4:08, 4:36, 4:39), turns (3:58, 4:47), and octaves (4:31). Pay attention to all of the beautiful “doo-DIT” phrase endings that Barron includes to add rhythmic energy.

Play along with this track to practice improvising over “Evening in Lyon.” Strive to get to the place where you can play with the track without looking at the music. Staying with the form takes practice, so log some hours! The best jazz musicians have the melody of the piece going on in their subconscious while they are improvising so that they don’t lose track of where they are. Experiment with letting your ears wander to each different instrument, even as you improvise.

UNIT 5 ASSIGNMENTS

- 1. Improvisation Exercise 5 – ii-V-I Practice; Practice in C major, B-flat major, A-flat major, and B major**
- 2. Practice transposing ii-V-I Lick 3 to all twelve keys**
- 3. Evening in Lyon – Head**
 - a. Play melody with good swing articulation against held roots
 - b. Find chords
 - c. Practice coordination of comping and melody
 - d. Practice personalizing the melody
- 4. Evening in Lyon – Improvisation**
 - a. Practice scale exercises
 - b. Improvise, while shifting your focus to each focus prompt
 - c. Create at least two “scripts” for your solo and practice executing them smoothly
 - d. Write and practice a dream solo
- 5. Guided Listening 5: “An Afternoon in Paris” by Kenny Barron**
 - a. Listen at least twenty times
 - b. Play along with the recording. Play your dream solo and improvise
 - c. Strive to stay with the form with and without the music in front of you

Unit 6

Introduction to Type A/B Voicings



Scan Here for
Unit 6 Videos

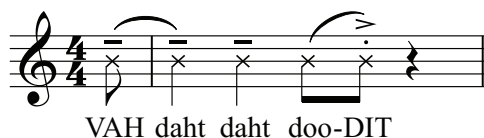
Improvisation Exercise 6A – Building Rhythmic Vocabulary 2

This week, you will continue building your rhythmic vocabulary by practicing **Rhythm 2**, which mixes quarter notes and eighth notes. Remember that quarters should be played “fat” – long but not connected, taking up the whole beat, but with a clear space before the next note.

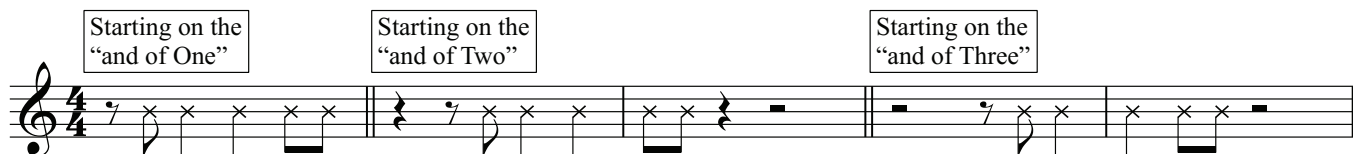
This week, practice improvising over ii-V-I's in F, E-flat, and G, using the rhythm below:



The example below shows the rhythm with articulation and scat syllables written in:



As you did in Unit 5, practice this rhythm starting on every possible beat. The original rhythm starts on the “and of four.” The example below shows the same rhythm starting on the “and of one,” “and of two,” and “and of three.” In the second and third scenarios, the rhythm spills over into the next measure. Don’t let that deter you. It is common for phrases to last for multiple measures.



Practice repeating each rhythm in isolation, then practice alternating between two of the rhythms until you can use this rhythm with complete confidence. Alternate between this rhythm and Rhythm 1, making sure to practice starting on different beats.

Improvisation Exercise 6B – Arpeggios

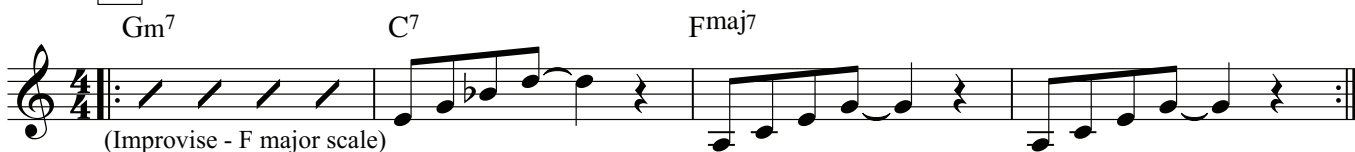
Arpeggios, melodies that spell out the notes of a chord, are key to a convincing approach to jazz improvisation. Arpeggios connect chords and melody, create interesting melodic shapes, and strengthen voice leading between the chords of a progression.

The most common arpeggio in jazz starts on the third of the chord and arpeggiates up to the fifth, seventh, and ninth. The **ninth** is an upper extension equivalent to the second scale degree of the major scale. The example below shows these **3-5-7-9 arpeggios** over a ii-V-I in F major.

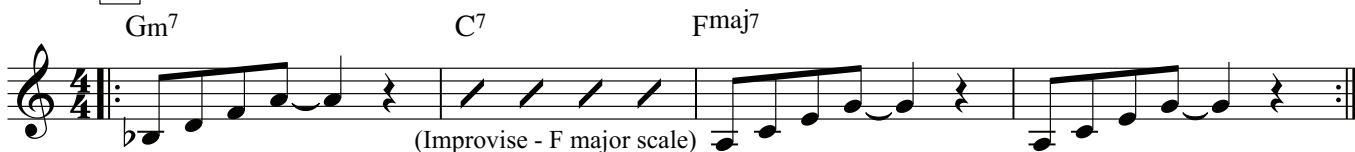


To practice these arpeggios, first simply play the 3-5-7-9 arpeggios for the chords of a ii-V-I progression in F, E-flat, and G to etch the arpeggios into your muscle memory. Then, replace one arpeggio at a time with scalar improvisation, as indicated below. Stay on each exercise for a few minutes before moving to the next one.

A



B



C



D



Strive to lead smoothly into and away from each arpeggio rather than suddenly jumping between the improvisation and pre-planned sections. Practice maneuvering in and out of these arpeggios in this week's three keys.

Then, practice replacing two measures with improvisation, as outlined below.

A

Gm⁷ C⁷ Fmaj⁷

(Improvise - F major scale)

B

Gm⁷ C⁷ Fmaj⁷

(Improvise - F major scale)

C

Gm⁷ C⁷ Fmaj⁷

(Improvise - F major scale)

D

Gm⁷ C⁷ Fmaj⁷

(Improvise - F major scale) (Improvise - F major scale)

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *Why do you call it the ninth and not the second?*

A: Chords are built by stacking the odd-numbered notes from a scale. While classical chords usually stop after just three or maybe four notes, in jazz, we select seven notes, all the way up to the **thirteenth** note of a scale (we would keep going if we could, but starting with the fifteenth note, the notes of the scale repeat starting from number one). Even though the ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth are equivalent to the second, fourth, and sixth notes of the scale, respectively, we always refer to the odd numbers when we're talking about chord tones.



Q: *Wait, I thought an arpeggio was a warmup that goes up and down the piano for multiple octaves?*

A: It is true that pianists practice arpeggios that span the range of the piano as a technical warmup. Just like a scale could be one octave or many octaves, an arpeggio can be played up and down the piano as a technical exercise or in a more limited range as a part of a melody.

Q: *Why is the 3-5-7-9 arpeggio so important in jazz? Why not start from the root?*

A: Although the root is important in terms of building a chord, it is the least colorful note to play in an improvisation because it is already being played by the bass. Therefore, the root doesn't create much harmonic richness, either consonant or dissonant. It is ideal to start from the third because the third provides a consonant harmony with the root. Including the ninth adds color and character. Analyze Charlie Parker's piece "Donna Lee" in *The Real Book* to see just how often some jazz greats use this 3-5-7-9 formula.

Q: *Do I always have to play through the scale to find the ninth of the chord?*

A: Actually, for major, minor, and dominant seventh chords, the ninth is always a whole step above the root of the chord. Beware the keys of E and B! Students often struggle to find the correct ninths in these keys because although the root is a white key, the ninth is a black key. Make sure to play an F-sharp as the ninth of any E chord and a C-sharp for the ninth of any B chord.

ii-V-I Lick 4

ii-V-I Lick 4 fits with the first two measures of a long-form ii-V-I. This lick is designed to practice a 3-5-7-9 arpeggio, a turn, as described in Unit 5, and a fingering maneuver that might be less intuitive for some improvisers.

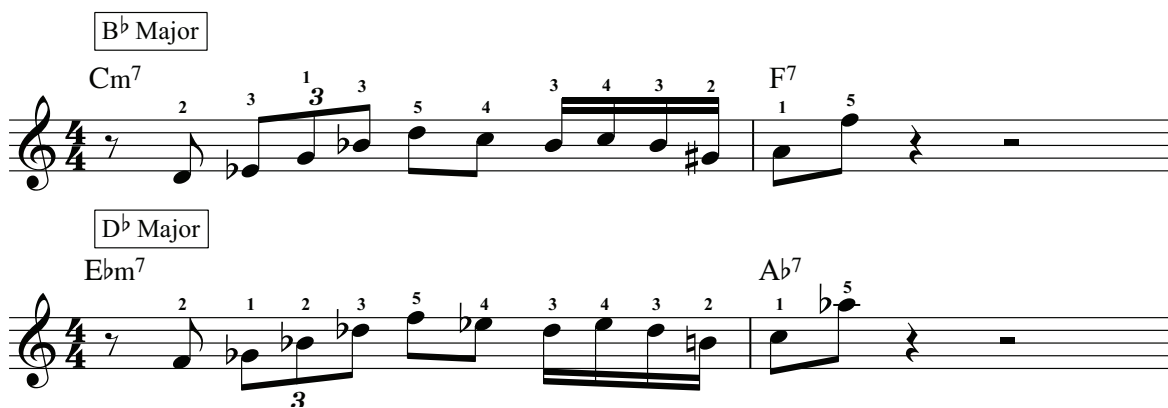


See the turn on beat four of the first measure? Remember that a turn goes up to a diatonic neighbor above the main note and returns back through the main note. The A-sharp right before measure two is a **lower chromatic neighbor**, a note that leads into a chord tone from a half-step below. In this case, the A-sharp is ornamenting the B natural on the downbeat of measure two.

Many improvisers naturally start on their thumb when playing an ascending phrase like ii-V-I Lick 4. In this case, starting with the thumb will place your hand in an awkward position and make it difficult to play this phrase accurately. In the key of C, try crossing your second finger over your thumb, as indicated below:



Although the fingering will change depending on the key, a cross-over will be the best solution in every key. Below, ii-V-I Lick 4 is written in two other keys that require different fingerings. Notice that in the key of D-flat major, it is necessary to put your thumb on a black key.



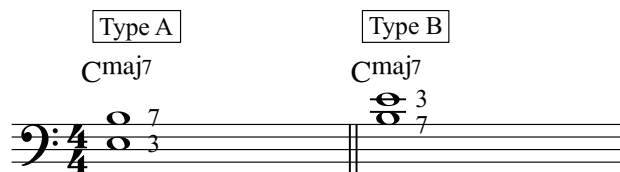
Two-Handed Type A/B Voicings

It is time to learn your first jazz voicing. A **voicing** is a way of arranging notes to make a chord more pleasing, resonant, or stylistically appropriate. Don't confuse chord voicings with the art of voicing at the piano, in which certain notes of a chord are played louder than others.

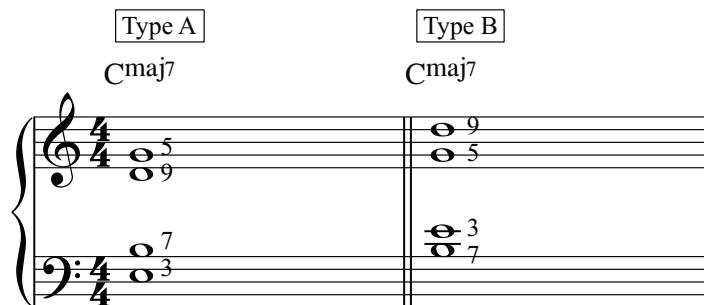
Two-handed Type A/B voicings are designed for playing in an ensemble, specifically when a bassist is playing a bassline and another instrumentalist or vocalist is serving the melodic role. Because these voicings don't use the root of the chord, it is important to practice them with **play-alongs** so that you can hear the root. See the introduction for more information on play-alongs.

Type A/B voicings place the chord's **essential tones**, the thirds and sevenths, in the left hand. The third and seventh are called essential tones because they are absolutely necessary to hear the harmony. With just the root, third, and seventh, it is possible to identify the chord as a major seventh, minor seventh, or dominant seventh.

In a **Type A** voicing, the third is placed below the seventh. In a **Type B** voicing, the seventh is placed below the third. These terms aren't musically important, but they are useful to keep track of voice-leading patterns as you learn.



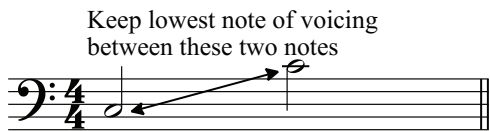
In the right hand, play the **color tones** of the chord, the fifth and the ninth. Later on, since these notes aren't essential, you will learn to use different combinations of color tones, but master the fifth and ninth for now. In Type A voicings, the ninth is placed below the fifth. In Type B voicings, the fifth is placed below the ninth. Keep the right hand and left hand as close together as possible. There will typically be just a third between the top note of the left hand and the bottom note of the right hand.



Taken as a whole, the formulas for these voicings are:

| Type A | Type B |
|--------|--------|
| 5 | 9 |
| 9 | 5 |
| 7 | 3 |
| 3 | 7 |

It is important to play any chord or voicing in the ideal **register**, or range of the piano. Chords can get muddy when they are placed too low, or they can get in the way of the melody if they are placed too high. For Type A/B voicings, keep the lowest notes roughly between middle C (C4) and the C below middle C (C3). The top three notes may be placed above C4. Just keep track of the register of the lowest note.



In the example below, Type A and Type B voicings are written out for different chord types. Practice writing them out yourself and check that your answers match those given. In the second measure, since the lowest note is a C, the note on the border of the ideal register, the voicing is acceptable in either position given below.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Fm ⁷ | D ⁷ | Gmaj ⁷ | Ebm ⁷ | Bb ⁷ |
| | | | | |
| Type A | Type B | Type B | Type A | Type B |

Practice finding the correct Type A/B voicings for the chords listed below. To help you form the voicings correctly, the exercise prompts you to stack the chord tones in root position first and then arrange them into a Type A or Type B voicing. The first one is done for you.

| Gm ⁷ | E♭maj ⁷ | A ⁷ |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Stacked in root position: | Stacked in root position: | Stacked in root position: |
| Type B | Type A | Type A |

| D♭maj ⁷ | G ⁷ | B♭ ⁷ |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Stacked in root position: | Stacked in root position: | Stacked in root position: |
| Type B | Type B | Type A |

| Em ⁷ | Cm ⁷ | E♭maj ⁷ |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Stacked in root position: | Stacked in root position: | Stacked in root position: |
| Type B | Type A | Type A |

ii-V-I's with Type A/Type B Voicings

For ii-V-I's, alternating between Type A and Type B voicings yields the smoothest voice leading. In fact, if you think of the notes in pairs – the two inner notes and the two outer notes – one pair stays the same and the other steps down from one chord to the next.

A ii-V-I progression can start with either a Type A or Type B voicing but then should alternate, either from Type A to B to A or from Type B to A to B.

Diagram illustrating a ii-V-I progression in C major using Type A and Type B voicings. The progression is: Dm⁷ (Type A), G⁷ (Type B), Cmaj⁷ (Type A), Dm⁷ (Type B), G⁷ (Type A), Cmaj⁷ (Type B). The notes are shown on a grand staff, with the bass clef and treble clef staves. The voicings are labeled Type A and Type B below the staves.

These ii-V-I progressions will always move downwards. In the second example above, the Type B voicing for the D minor seventh chord has a C on bottom, the note that is right on the border of being too high or too low. Although the voicing could technically be played starting on either C3 or C4, the higher voicing works better, because the progression moves downwards. Starting on C4 rather than C3 gives you some room to move down.

Here are some ii-V-I progressions from other keys written in ABA and BAB format.

Diagram illustrating ii-V-I progressions in E^b Major and B^b Major. The first progression is in E^b Major: Fm⁷ (Type A), B^b7 (Type B), E^bmaj⁷ (Type A). The second progression is in B^b Major: Cm⁷ (Type B), F⁷ (Type A), B^bmaj⁷ (Type B). The notes are shown on a grand staff, with the bass clef and treble clef staves. The voicings are labeled Type A and Type B below the staves.

Diagram illustrating ii-V-I progressions in D Major and G Major. The first progression is in D Major: Em⁷ (Type A), A⁷ (Type B), Dmaj⁷ (Type A). The second progression is in G Major: Am⁷ (Type B), D⁷ (Type A), Gmaj⁷ (Type B). The notes are shown on a grand staff, with the bass clef and treble clef staves. The voicings are labeled Type A and Type B below the staves.

It is essential to practice ii-V-I progressions using these voicings so that you are prepared with good voicings when you see the progression in tunes. Below, a series of ii-V-I progressions is arranged like the exercise you did in Unit 3. Now, you should play the exercise using Type A/B voicings rather than root position chords. To master all of the ii-V-I progressions you have to practice four ways:

- Letter A, set 1, starting on Type A
- Letter B, set 1, starting on Type B
- Letter C, set 2, starting on Type A
- Letter D, set 2, starting on Type B

The staves below have been left blank so that you can write in your voicings. First, write them out and practice reading the voicings, then practice completing the exercise without looking at your notes.

A
ii-V-I in C Major

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

ii-V-I in B^b Major

Cm⁷ F⁷ B^bmaj⁷

Type A Type B Type A Type A Type B Type A

ii-V-I in A^b Major

B^bm⁷ E^b⁷ A^bmaj⁷

ii-V-I in G^b Major

A^bm⁷ D^b⁷ G^bmaj⁷

Type A Type B Type A Type A Type B Type A

ii-V-I in E Major

F[#]m⁷ B⁷ E[#]maj⁷

ii-V-I in D Major

E^m⁷ A⁷ Dmaj⁷

Type A Type B Type A Type A Type B Type A

B

ii-V-I in C Major ii-V-I in B^b Major

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷ Cm⁷ F⁷ B^bmaj⁷

Type B Type A Type B Type B Type A Type B

Detailed description: This block contains a musical staff with two systems. The first system is for C Major, showing the ii-V-I progression Dm7-G7-Cmaj7. The second system is for Bb Major, showing the ii-V-I progression Cm7-F7-Bbmaj7. Each chord is placed above a measure on a grand staff (treble and bass clef). Below the staff, the voicing types are labeled: Type B for Dm7 and Cm7, Type A for G7 and F7, and Type B for Cmaj7 and Bbmaj7. A double bar line separates the two systems.

ii-V-I in A^b Major ii-V-I in G^b Major

B^bm⁷ E^b⁷ A^bmaj⁷ A^bm⁷ D^b⁷ G^bmaj⁷

Type B Type A Type B Type B Type A Type B

Detailed description: This block contains a musical staff with two systems. The first system is for Ab Major, showing the ii-V-I progression Bbm7-Eb7-Abmaj7. The second system is for Gb Major, showing the ii-V-I progression Abm7-Db7-Gbmaj7. Each chord is placed above a measure on a grand staff. Below the staff, the voicing types are labeled: Type B for Bbm7 and Abm7, Type A for Eb7 and Db7, and Type B for Abmaj7 and Gbmaj7. A double bar line separates the two systems.

ii-V-I in E Major ii-V-I in D Major

F[#]m⁷ B⁷ Emaj⁷ Em⁷ A⁷ Dmaj⁷

Type B Type A Type B Type B Type A Type B

Detailed description: This block contains a musical staff with two systems. The first system is for E Major, showing the ii-V-I progression F#m7-B7-Emaj7. The second system is for D Major, showing the ii-V-I progression Em7-A7-Dmaj7. Each chord is placed above a measure on a grand staff. Below the staff, the voicing types are labeled: Type B for F#m7 and Em7, Type A for B7 and A7, and Type B for Emaj7 and Dmaj7. A double bar line separates the two systems.

C

ii-V-I in D^b Major

ii-V-I in B Major

E^bm⁷

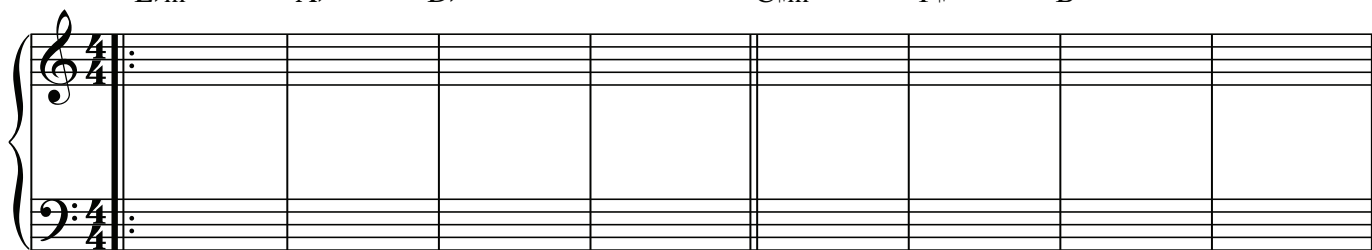
A^b7

D^bmaj7

C[#]m⁷

F[#]7

Bmaj7



Type A

Type B

Type A

Type A

Type B

Type A

ii-V-I in A Major

ii-V-I in G Major

Bm⁷

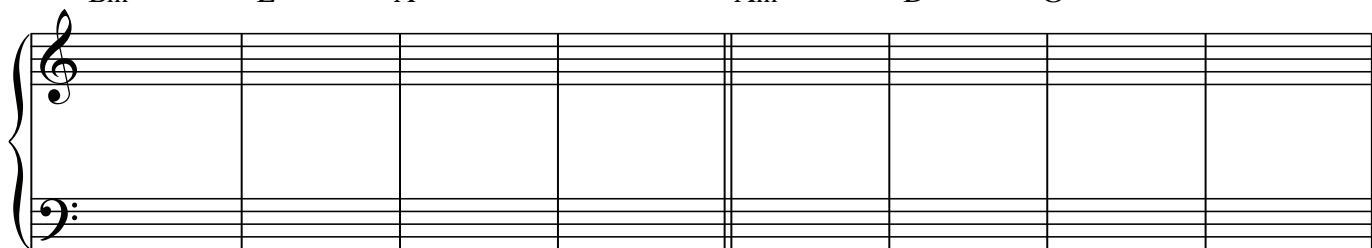
E⁷

A^{maj}7

Am⁷

D⁷

Gmaj7



Type A

Type B

Type A

Type A

Type B

Type A

ii-V-I in F Major

ii-V-I in E^b Major

Gm⁷

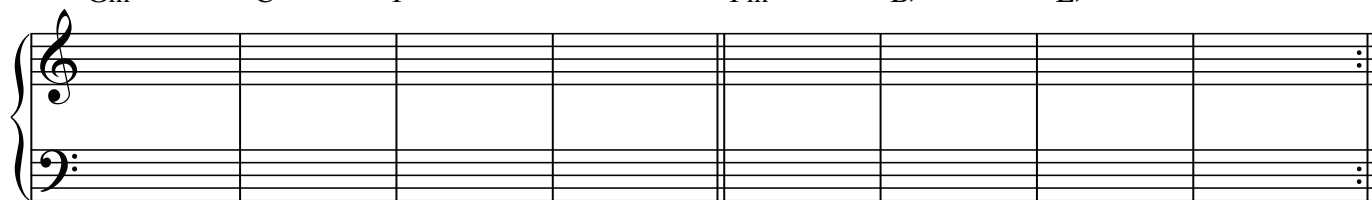
C⁷

Fmaj7

Fm⁷

B^b7

E^bmaj7



Type A

Type B

Type A

Type A

Type B

Type A

D

ii-V-I in D^b Major ii-V-I in B Major

E^bm⁷ A^b7 D^bmaj7 C[#]m⁷ F[#]7 Bmaj7

Type B Type A Type B Type B Type A Type B

ii-V-I in A Major ii-V-I in G Major

Bm⁷ E⁷ Amaj7 Am⁷ D⁷ Gmaj7

Type B Type A Type B Type B Type A Type B

ii-V-I in F Major ii-V-I in E^b Major

Gm⁷ C⁷ Fmaj7 Fm⁷ B^b7 E^bmaj7

Type B Type A Type B Type B Type A Type B

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When I apply these voicings to a tune, should I start on Type A or Type B?

A: You get to choose! Usually, I choose a voicing with the lowest note in the middle of that range between C3 and C4. Remember that Western harmony tends to move downwards, so it is better to start a little higher, rather than a little lower, to give yourself some room before you reach the lower parts of the range.

Q: What do I do if I hit the bottom of the range or go beyond it?

A: Jump up! Like a typewriter, go back to the middle or top of the range. You can jump up by simply moving up an octave or by flipping voicing type from A to B or vice versa. If you want to be sophisticated, avoid jumping when the progression is in the middle of resolving a tension, like from V chord to a I chord. But when you get to the bottom of the range, don't go lower. Jump up instead.

Q: Should I always alternate between Type A and Type B?

A: No! Within a ii-V-I progression, you will create the smoothest voice leading by alternating between Type A and Type B. Generally, when the bass is moving in the circle of fifths, alternating between Type A and Type B will lead to the smoothest voice leading.

In other cases, consecutively using Type A or Type B multiple times in a row might create the smoothest voice leading. Generally, it is best to stay on the same type consecutively when the root of the chord stays the same or moves by step. As you work on voicings for tunes, move to the voicing type that creates the smoothest voice leading.

Q: Is there a specific fingering I should use for these voicings?

A: Fingering isn't so important for these voicings because you won't be making legato connections when you're comping. When I practice these voicings, I minimize movement by using my second and fourth fingers as well as my pinkies and thumbs. For now, work on getting the notes right and don't stress too much about fingering.

Q: I'm playing a tune that has a diminished chord. How can I find a Type A/B voicing for a diminished chord?

A: Good question. To review, diminished seventh chords are indicated with a tiny circle before the "7," like C^{o7}. The process for creating a voicing for a diminished seventh chord is pretty much the same as for other kinds of chords. Take the third and seventh of the diminished chord in the left hand. Be careful because diminished sevenths often look like sixths. In the right hand, play the fifth (diminished sevenths use a flat fifth, as compared to the major scale) and instead of a ninth, play the root for the fourth note of the voicing. Here are a few examples:

| C ^{o7} | E ^{b o7} | B ^{o7} | D ^{o7} | G ^{o7} | E ^{o7} |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | | | | |
| Type A | Type A | Type A | Type B | Type B | Type B |

Below, you will find Type A/B voicings written out for “Evening in Lyon.” One of your assignments this week will be to write voicings for two tunes from the Tune Bank.

Evening in Lyon

With Type A/B Voicings

Jeremy Siskind

Cmaj7 Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7 Bbm7 Eb7

 Type A Type A Type B Type A Type A Type B

5 Abmaj7 Dm7 G7 1. Cmaj7 Dm7 G7 2. Cmaj7

 Type A Type A Type B Type A Type A Type B Type A

17 Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 Am7

 Type A Type B Type A Type B

21 Dm7 G7 C#m7 F#7 Dm7 G7

 Type A Type B Type A Type B Type A Type B

25 Cmaj7 Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7 Bbm7 Eb7

Type A Type A Type B Type A Type A Type B

29 Abmaj7 Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 Dm7 G7

Type A Type A Type B Type A Type A Type B

Practicing Ear Training with “Evening in Lyon”

Training one’s ear is an essential part of being a good improviser. Improvising without being able to hear what you are about to play in your head is kind of like stumbling through an unfamiliar space in the dark. Hearing music in your head before you play it is called **audiation**, and the best way to test how well you are hearing a chord progression is by **singing**. Although you might not be a singer and you might not even like singing, it is a foundational tool for training your ear. So don’t be shy!

First, practice singing the roots of the chords for “Evening in Lyon.” It doesn’t matter what octave or register you sing the notes in, as long as you sing the root note of each chord. At first, play the line at the piano and then sing the note. Then, strive to sing each note before you play it on the piano, only using the piano to confirm that you have sung the correct pitch.

The first eight measures are written for you below. Remember, you can sing this in any register.

Cmaj7 Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7 Bbm7 Eb7 Abmaj7 Dm7 G7

1. Cmaj7 Dm7 G7

Next, practice playing the root but singing the third of the chord. Again, at first, feel free to help yourself by playing the note before singing it, but strive to sing the pitch before playing it. It is not important whether you go up or down from one pitch to the next. Do whatever is comfortable for your voice.

Sing

Cmaj7 Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7 Bbm7 Eb7 Abmaj7 Dm7 G7 1. Cmaj7 Dm7 G7

Play

Finally, get a little creative with your singing. While still playing the roots, create improvised connections between the thirds of the chords using your voice. These could be scales associated with the chords, chromatic scales, some repeated notes, or anything else you hear. The important thing is that you land on the third of each chord as it arrives. Three possibilities for the first four measures are given below.

A **Sing**

Cmaj7 Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7 Bbm7 Eb7

Play

B **Sing**

Cmaj7 Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7 Bbm7 Eb7

Play

C **Sing**

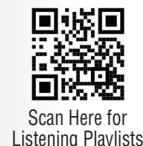
Cmaj7 Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7 Bbm7 Eb7

Play

See how many different variations you can invent. Ask yourself “What If” questions to create more and more variations. What if each note were repeated? What if the first melodic gesture were to skip up by an octave? What if the main rhythm consisted of quarter-note triplets? What if there were turns or lower chromatic neighbors? These connected thirds will help guide your future improvisations.

GUIDED LISTENING 6 –

“Think of One” by Thelonious Monk



“Think of One,” written by Thelonious Monk, is the eighth track from Monk’s 1963 album *Criss-Cross*.

Thelonious Monk (1917-1982) possessed a singularly unique voice in the history of jazz and recorded music. A pianist who thrived in the cracks between the harmony, Monk was capable of making even the most traditional melodies sound strange and even the strangest melodies sound appealing.

Although Monk was present for the birth of the bebop era and collaborated with the great bebop musicians, his music is different than that of his peers. Monk took all of the complex colorations of bebop and created his own musical lexicon that embraced unusual intervals, unintuitive rhythms, and odd forms, all while sounding hip and mysterious. Although many listeners assume Monk was simply a “sloppy” pianist, those who have studied his music know that his choices were intentional and he executed these choices with impressive precision and inimitable style.

Monk is thought of as one of the great jazz composers despite only having written about 70 short pieces in his career. Each piece feels like a bit of a riddle as Monk dwells on motifs, employs obscure intervals, mixes rhythmic units, and creates labyrinthine melodies. Monk was known for writing the middle part of the tune, the bridge, first and then filling in the A sections afterwards.

PERFORMERS

Charlie Rouse, saxophone

Thelonious Monk, piano

John Ore, bass

Frankie Dunlop, drums

Form

0:00-0:02 Intro (bass scale)

0:02-0:48 Head In (32 measures, AABA)

0:48-2:19 Saxophone Solo (2 Choruses)

2:19- 4:34 Piano Solo (3 Choruses)

4:34-end Head Out

The melody for “Think of One” is a great example of Monk’s eccentricities. The melody of the piece is almost completely based on a repeated “F.” Instead of the syncopations usually associated with jazz rhythm, Monk mostly places the F squarely on the beat. The last phrase of the A section melody is a machine gun burst of five sixteenth notes, an unusual rhythmic unit for jazz melodies. Besides the oddness of the rhythm, notice the interval for these sixteenth notes. The notes are arranged in a **tritone**, a diminished fifth, one of the most dissonant, unsingable intervals in all of music. In the bridge (starting at 0:25), instead of providing a musical contrast, Monk continues to dwell on the sixteenth note F’s, twisting and turning around the note until the melody feels like it has been turned inside out.

Besides the composition, notice Monk’s comping style, which is spare and stabbing behind Charlie Rouse’s angular solo. In his comping, Monk often references the melody and drops out for large periods of time. As he starts his solo, Monk’s obsession with the original melody continues and his first chorus is more of a variation than a brand-new melody. His tone on the piano is percussive. He doesn’t play with lightness or legato, but with an up-and-down finger-heavy, disconnected approach.

Monk’s music is often an acquired taste for listeners. The first few listens to Monk’s music can be jarring. His playing contradicts so many of the expectations of jazz music and it doesn’t sound “pretty,” in the traditional sense of the word. And yet, Monk embodies jazz. His playing exudes uncompromising self-expression, rhythmic complexity, and lightning-quick spontaneity. With patience and openness, you will learn to appreciate the richness of his music.

UNIT 6 ASSIGNMENTS

1. Improvisation Exercise 6A – Building Rhythmic Vocabulary

2. Improvisation Exercise 6B – Arpeggios

3. Two-Handed Type A/B Voicings

- a. Written practice
- b. ii-V-I practice – four sets; write out and work to play quickly, from memory
- c. Choose two tunes you have already played. Write out and practice your Type A/B voicings. Your goal is to be able to look at the lead sheet and execute your voicings from memory so that you start to form associations between the chords and the voicings without having to read the notation.

4. Practice your singing ear training exercises on “Evening in Lyon” (and other tunes!)

- a. Sing the roots of the chords
- b. Play the roots, sing the thirds
- c. Create improvised or preplanned connections between the thirds of the chords

5. Guided Listening 6: “Think of One” by Thelonious Monk

- a. Listen at least twenty times
- b. Listen for the ways in which the composition defies traditional norms of jazz
- c. Pay attention to Monk’s unique style of comping

Unit 7

The Blues Form



Scan Here for
Unit 7 Videos

Improvisation Exercise 7 – Blues Scale

The **blues scale** is a set of six notes that is used by jazz musicians to improvise over many different types of chord progressions. As compared to a major scale, the blues scale includes the root, the lowered third, the fourth, the raised fourth, the fifth, and the lowered seventh. Blues scales in C, F, and G are written below.

Blues Scale in C

R b3 4 #4 5 b7 (R)

Blues Scale in F

R b3 4 #4 5 b7 (R)

Blues Scale in G

R b3 4 #4 5 b7 (R)

One application for the blues scale is to improvise over a ii-V-I progression. When improvising over a ii-V-I, use the blues scale of the I chord for the entire progression. For example, for a ii-V-I in C major, use the C blues scale for the D minor seventh, G dominant seventh, and C major seventh.

Really listen to yourself as you improvise using the blues scale. Although the blues scale is designed to create rubs, it usually sounds best to arrive at less-tense notes as phrases end. When in doubt, end phrases on the first note of the scale, the root of the I chord.

Learn the blues scale in the keys of C, F, G, and B-flat. In your left hand, play simple, stacked voicings for a ii-V-I progression, comping with the Charleston rhythm. In the right hand, improvise using the appropriate blues scale, listening intently to whether each note sounds tense or resolved.

Stacked Voicings for ii-V-I in C Major

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

FAQ




Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *Wait, but I thought we were supposed to improvise using the major scale of the I chord for a ii-V-I progression. What happened to that?*

A: That is still true! This is another option. The best musicians mix between lots of different scales as they're improvising.

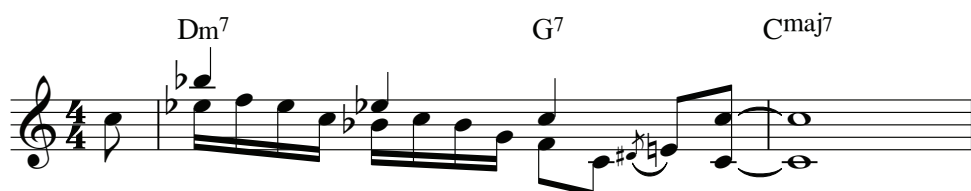
Q: *I have been told there is both a major and minor blues scale. Is that true?*

A: Kind of! I don't like those terms because major and minor are terms from Western music theory and the blues is not from the Western music tradition. However, some theoreticians call the blues scale presented above the **minor blues scale**. The same scale starting on the second note is sometimes called the **major blues scale**. I've also heard this "major blues scale" referred to as the "sweet" scale and the "bright blues scale." As compared to the major scale of the key, this scale contains the root, second, flat third, normal third, fifth, and sixth. To avoid confusion, this book will refer to the blues scale already presented simply as "the blues scale" and the "major" blues scale as the "sweet scale."

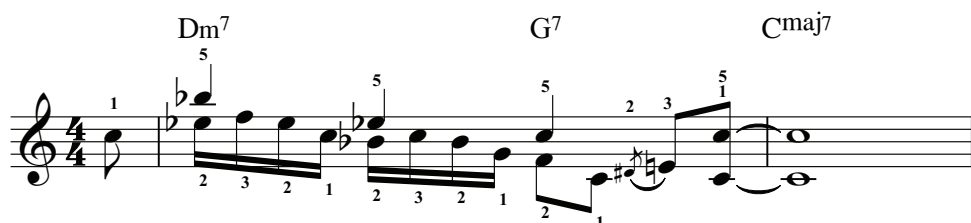
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">"Minor" Blues Scale in C</div>  <p>R $\flat 3$ 4 $\sharp 4$ 5 $\flat 7$ (R)</p> | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">"Major" Blues Scale in E\flat</div>  <p>R 2 $\flat 3$ 3 5 6 (R)</p> <p>notice this scale has the same notes as C "minor" blues scale</p> | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">"Major" Blues Scale in C</div>  <p>R 2 $\flat 3$ 3 5 6 (R)</p> <p>notice this scale has the same notes as the A "minor" blues scale</p> |
|---|---|---|

ii-V-I Lick 5 (Blues)

Double notes and turns are typical in the blues style. ii-V-I Lick 5 gives you the opportunity to practice these blues staples. As you listen to Lick 5, you will probably notice that the lick almost sounds like it belongs in a minor key rather than in C major. This is typical of the blues style, which mixes major and minor sounds.



The recommended fingering for C major is given below. Practice flipping fingers 5 and 2 smoothly over your thumb without any audible silence in between.



ii-V-I Exercise

Continue practicing your two-handed Type A/Type B voicings. This unit, you will tackle the voicings in three ways:

1. Practice ii-V-I's in all keys, going up by half steps as written below. The example starts with Type A voicings, but remember to start with Type B voicings as well.

Row 1: Dm⁷ (Type A), G⁷ (Type B), Cmaj⁷ (Type A), Ebm⁷ (Type A), Ab⁷ (Type B), Dbmaj⁷ (Type A)

Row 2: Em⁷ (Type A), A⁷ (Type B), Dmaj⁷ (Type A), Fm⁷ (Type A), Bb⁷ (Type B), Ebmaj⁷ (Type A)

2. Practice ii-V progressions without the I chords through the circle of fifths as indicated below. Practice starting with both Type A and Type B, starting from both D minor seventh and E-flat minor seventh to prepare for all possibilities.

Row 1: ii-V in C (Dm⁷ Type A, G⁷ Type B), ii-V in B^b (Cm⁷ Type A, F⁷ Type B), ii-V in A^b (Bbm⁷ Type A, Eb⁷ Type B), ii-V in G^b (Abm⁷ Type A, Db⁷ Type B)

Row 2: (Same progressions as Row 1, but for Type B voicings)

3. Write out and practice voicings for two more tunes from the Tune Bank.

Blues Form

The **blues progression** is a twelve-measure chord progression that is used in all kinds of musical styles including rock, pop, jazz, and the blues style. Jazz musicians play lots of pieces that use the blues progression including standards like “Now’s the Time,” “Billie’s Bounce,” “Blue Monk,” “Tenor Madness,” “Things Ain’t What They Used to Be,” and many more. About a quarter of jazz standards are blues tunes or some variation of the blues. It is important for musicians interested in jazz to memorize the chord progression and practice executing it in every key.

The blues is traditionally divided into three four-measure phrases. Although different musicians add or change chords to color the harmony in ways appropriate for a style or genre, the overall format remains as follows:

1. In the first phrase, the harmony hangs around the I chord.
2. The second phrase begins on the IV chord and returns to the I chord after two measures.
3. The final phrase starts with a cadence that returns the music to the I chord. In a **rock blues**, the cadence is usually V-IV-I. In a **jazz blues**, the cadence is usually a ii-V-I progression.

The blues progression is unusual in that it uses dominant seventh chords for the tonic (I) and subdominant (IV) chords. In Western music, dominant seventh chords are almost exclusively used as tense sounds designed to resolve back to the tonic. However, the harmonic system used in the blues progression defies the traditions of Western harmony. As you play the blues, you will find that within the context of the blues form, these dominant seventh chords don’t sound like they need to resolve.

The example below shows a typical rock blues progression in F. The Roman numerals for the chords are given below the staff.

F⁷

(I)

5 B^b7 F⁷

(IV) (I)

9 C⁷ B^b7 F⁷ (C⁷)

(V) (IV) (I) (V)

The next example shows a typical jazz blues progression in F. Notice, in addition to the change in cadence, the jazz blues adds a quick move to the IV chord in measure two.

F7 Bb7 F7
 (I) (IV) (I)

5 Bb7 F7
 (IV) (I)

9 Gm7 C7 F7 (Gm7 C7)
 (ii) (V) (I) (ii) (V)

Remember that the chords in parentheses in the final measure are turnarounds, used to reset the music back to the beginning for more repetitions. Turnarounds should be played every time other than the final repetition. Although a simple V chord is used as the turnaround for the rock blues, a ii-V progression is more typical for the jazz blues.

Jazz musicians often add even more chords to the blues progression. If you want to see a blues progression with many chords added, look up “Blues for Alice” in *The Real Book*. For now, it is important to master the simple jazz blues progression presented above before graduating to more complex blues variations.

For this unit, practice the blues by completing three assignments:

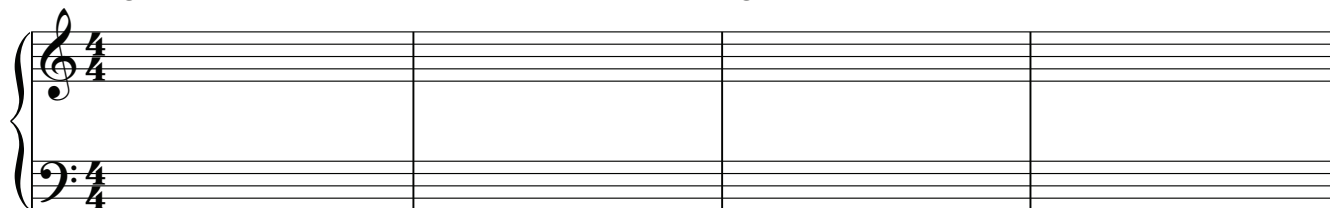
1. Memorize the jazz blues form in C, F, G, and B-flat.
2. Write out and practice two-handed A/B voicings in those four keys. Empty staves are provided on the next page.
3. Learn to play the blues heads “Blue Train” and “Blue Monk” with chords from *The Real Book*. Note: For some reason, *The Real Book* wrote the chords to “Blue Monk” without sevenths. All of the chords should be dominant seventh chords.

Blues in C

C⁷

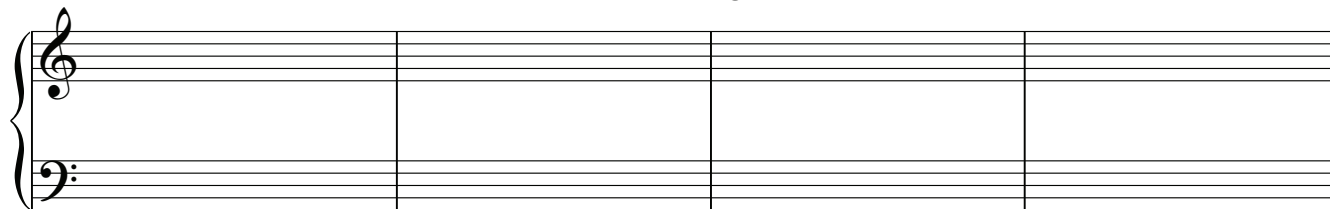
F⁷

C⁷



F⁷

C⁷

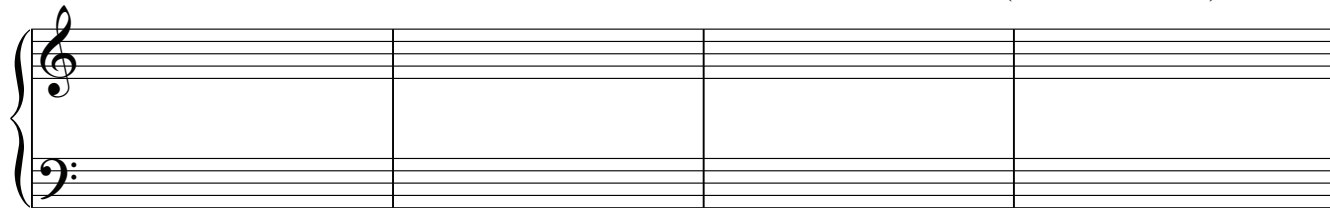


9 Dm⁷

G⁷

C⁷

(Dm⁷ G⁷)

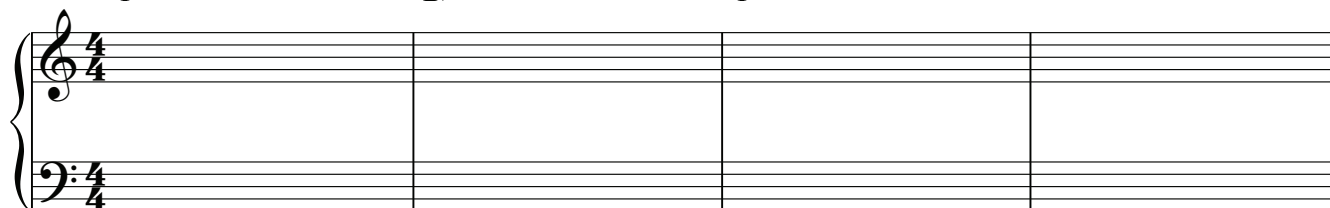


Blues in F

F⁷

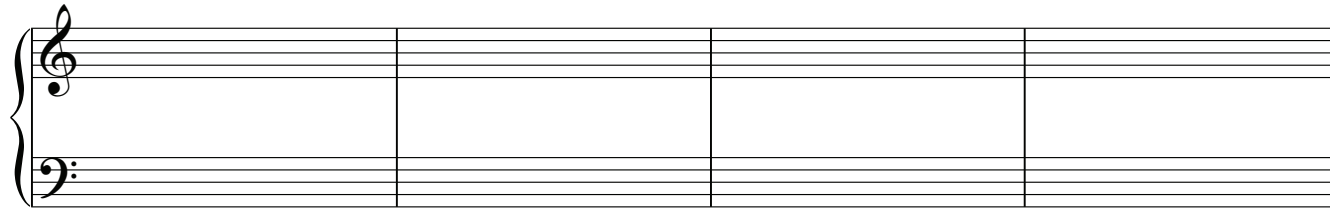
Bb⁷

F⁷



5 Bb⁷

F⁷

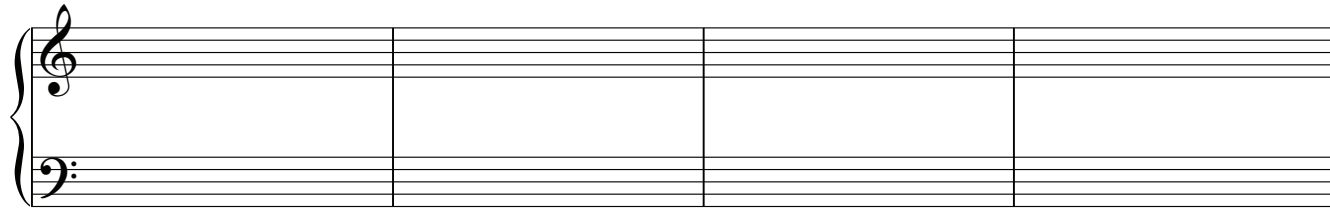


9 Gm⁷

C⁷

F⁷

(Gm⁷ C⁷)

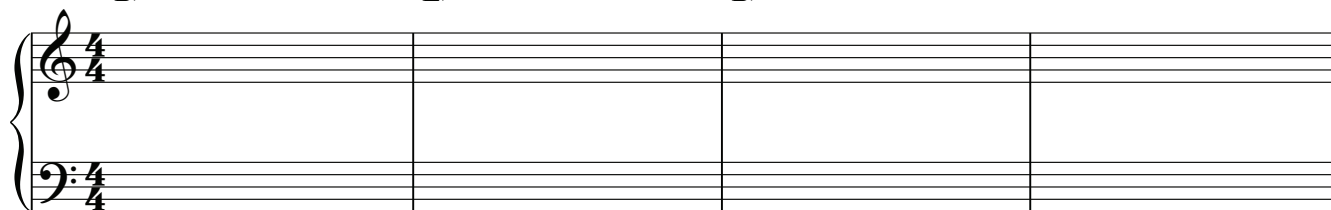


Blues in B \flat

B \flat ⁷

E \flat ⁷

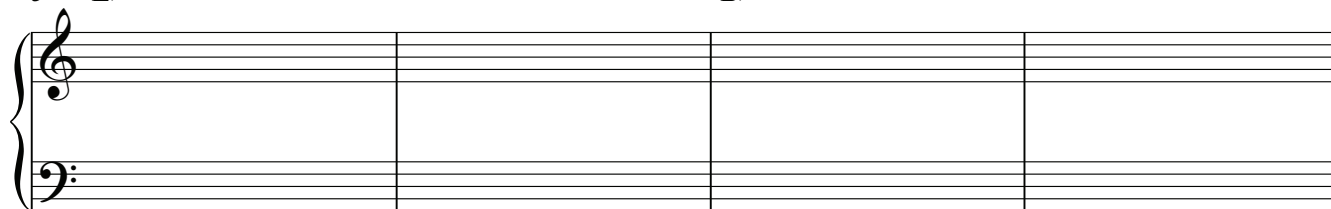
B \flat ⁷



5

E \flat ⁷

B \flat ⁷



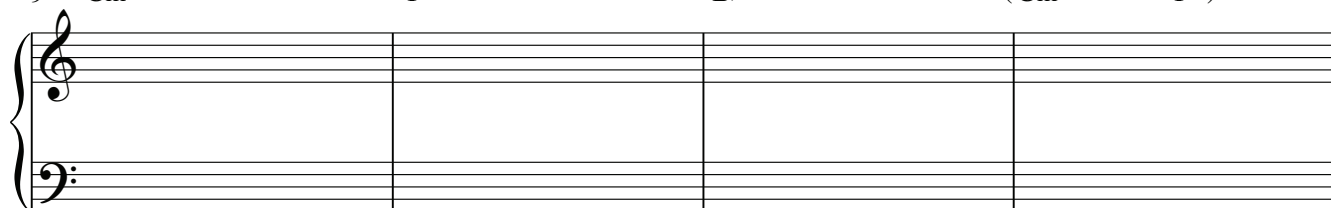
9

Cm⁷

F⁷

B \flat ⁷

(Cm⁷ F⁷)

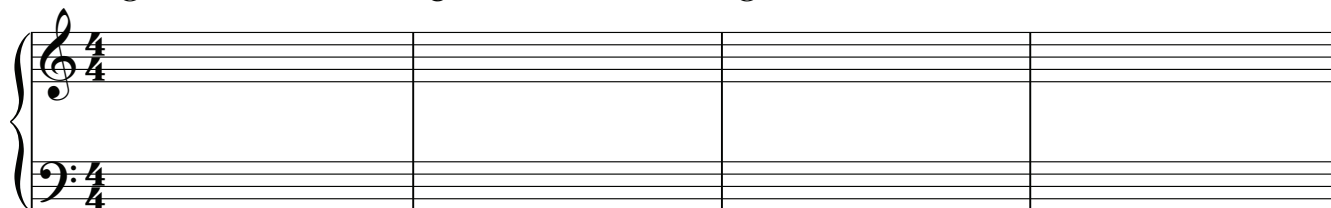


Blues in G

G⁷

C⁷

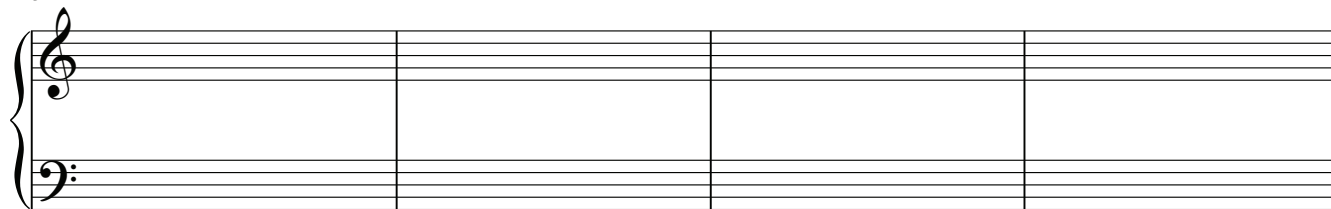
G⁷



5

C⁷

G⁷



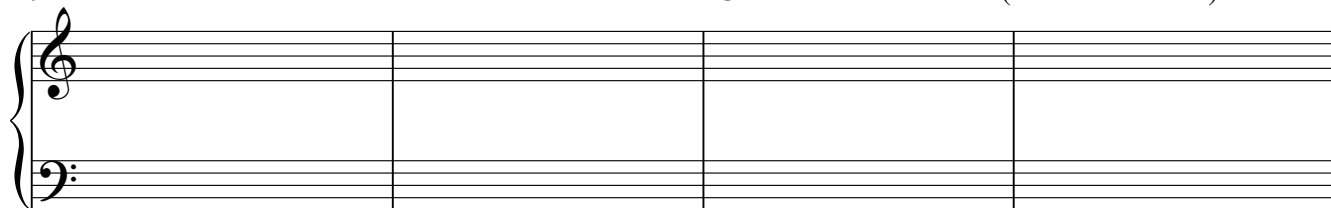
9

Am⁷

D⁷

G⁷

(Am⁷ D⁷)



Comping Variations 1

So far, you know how to comp using the Charleston and Reverse Charleston patterns. In this unit, you will learn some variations for these patterns.

1. Add a lead-in comp on beat four or the “and of three.”

After the Charleston and Reverse Charleston, you can add one more comp on beat four or on the “and of three.” Put a nice accent on any comp on the “and of three” to highlight the syncopation. This **lead-in** comp is particularly useful at the end of a four-measure phrase.

Charleston

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

lead-in on four lead-in on “and of three”

Reverse Charleston

Ebm⁷ Ab⁷ Dbmaj⁷

lead-in on “and of three” lead-in on four

2. Add a push-off, a group of two eighth notes in a row.

A **push-off** is the equivalent of the swing rhythm “doo-DIT,” two consecutive eighth notes with no space in between, punctuated by a percussive accent. Below, you will find some ways to add push-offs to the Charleston and Reverse Charleston.

Charleston

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

push-off from one to the “and of one”

push-off from two to the “and of two”

push-off from one to the “and of one”

Reverse Charleston

Ebm⁷ Ab⁷ Dbmaj⁷

push-off from three to the “and of three”

push-off from one to the “and of one”

push-off from one to the “and of one”

push-off from three to the “and of three”

3. Change the articulation

Instead of playing both chords short, add a measure with **long-short** articulation, springing off the second chord of the measure.

Charleston **Reverse Charleston**

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

normal articulation long-short normal articulation long-short

Practice mixing these comping styles in your ii-V-I exercises and when comping on a blues form. One example of comping for the ii-V-I exercises is given below.

System 1:

- Measure 1: Dm⁷ - Charleston - normal articulation
- Measure 2: G⁷ - Reverse Charleston - push-off on 3
- Measure 3: Cmaj⁷ - Reverse Charleston - long-short
- Measure 4: Cmaj⁷ - Charleston - lead-in on "and of three"

System 2:

- Measure 1: Cm⁷ - Charleston - push-off on 2
- Measure 2: F⁷ - Charleston - long-short
- Measure 3: B♭maj⁷ - Reverse Charleston - normal articulation
- Measure 4: B♭maj⁷ - Charleston - normal articulation

System 3:

- Measure 1: B♭m⁷ - Charleston - push-off on 1
- Measure 2: E♭⁷ - Reverse Charleston - long-short
- Measure 3: A♭maj⁷ - Charleston - lead-in on 4
- Measure 4: A♭maj⁷ - Reverse Charleston - long-short

FAQ

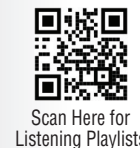
Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *When do I use these variations?*

A: There is no such thing as right or wrong when it comes to comping. Comping is all a matter of taste. Typically, pianists choose to comp in a busier style when the melody or soloist is less active. Comping can also be used to highlight musical phrasing, and pianists may choose to play a variation at the end of a phrase to signal that the phrase is ending. The best way to learn about the nuances of comping is to pay close attention to how pianists comp in the guided listening assignments.

GUIDED LISTENING 7 –

“Pie Eye’s Blues” by Duke Ellington



“Pie Eye’s Blues,” written by Duke Ellington, is the fourth track from Ellington’s 1959 album, *Blues in Orbit*. The piece is an updated, up-tempo version of Ellington’s piece, “Flirtibird,” from his soundtrack to the film, *Anatomy of a Murder*.

Duke Ellington is indisputably one of the most important, original, and prolific musicians in jazz history. A bandleader, composer, arranger, and pianist, Ellington’s massive output includes large-scale symphonic works, pieces for his long-running big band, popular songs, film scores, and jazz trio recordings. Although Ellington was an excellent pianist, in a sense, his big band was his instrument. A **big band** is a large jazz ensemble usually consisting of five saxophones, four trombones, four trumpets, and a rhythm section. One element that makes Ellington such a remarkable composer is that instead of writing generically for a set of instruments, he wrote specifically for individuals, the unique members of his band. Many of these members were chosen for their highly individual sounds, from the whimpering of lead alto saxophonist Johnny Hodges and the whinnying trombone soloing of “Tricky” Sam Nanton, to the smooth as silk tone of long-time baritone saxophonist Harry Carney.

PERSONNEL

Duke Ellington, pianist, composer
Ray Nance, trumpet
Cat Anderson, trumpet
Shorty Baker, trumpet
Britt Woodman, trombone
Matthew Gee, trombone
Booty Wood, trombone
Jimmy Hamilton, reeds
Johnny Hodges, alto saxophone
Russel Procope, alto saxophone
Paul Gonsalves, tenor saxophone
Harry Carney, baritone saxophone
Jimmy Woode, bass
Jimmy Johnson, drums

Form

0:00-0:18 Head (12-bar blues), piano melody
0:18-0:35 Head 2
0:35-0:50 Head 3
0:50-1:40 Trumpet Solo (three choruses)
1:40-2:42 Tenor Saxophone Solo (four choruses)
2:42-3:12 Head + Tenor Solo Continues
(two choruses)
3:12-end Ending

On “Pie Eye’s Blues,” once the band starts playing together around 2:42, you don’t hear Ellington playing the piano too much. With approximately fifteen horn players filling in the harmonies, there is not much open space for the pianist to play chords. When playing in a big band, a pianist must determine when their input is actually needed and when it is creating too much clutter. When comping, one choice a pianist can make is silence. Jazz musicians sometimes jokingly refer to the choice not to play as **strolling**, as though a player is taking a walk instead of comping.

GUIDED LISTENING 7 – (CONTINUED)

In a big band setting, **backgrounds**, accompanimental melodies or chords, are often used instead of comping to accompany solos. The first backgrounds enter at 2:12, with a repeated trombone line accompanying the tenor solo. After two choruses of increasing volume, the trombone background is replaced by the saxophones playing the original melody behind a trumpet who hangs around the tonic note, E-flat, altering his sound using a mute. A **mute** is an object put into the bell of a brass instrument to change the tone. In the final choruses, Ellington's piano is added in call-and-response fashion with the melody, bringing the piece to a climactic and cacophonous finale.

Besides listening to all of the interlocking parts of the big band, pay attention to the blues form. "Pie Eye's Blues" is a traditional twelve-bar blues. The melody is played three times at the beginning, which is a little unusual, but works here because Ellington gives the melody to a different instrument each time. Memorize the melody and continually sing it in your head even as the solos begin, noting the beginning of each chorus. Notice that changes in the arrangement, such as entrances, backgrounds, and new soloists, generally happen at the beginning of a chorus. As you listen, see if you can hear some spots where the soloists use the blues scale.

UNIT 7 ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Improvisation Exercise 7 – Improvise using the blues scale in the keys of C, F, G, and B-flat major**
2. **ii-V-I Lick 5 – Remember the four elements of practicing a lick:**
 - a. Learn the lick with good articulation
 - b. Practice coordination with comping patterns
 - c. Transpose to all twelve keys (or as many as possible)
 - d. Apply to tunes
3. **ii-V-I Exercises**
 - a. Practice ii-V-I's in ascending half steps through all twelve keys
 - b. Practice ii-V's without the I chord in the circle of fifths starting with both Type A & Type B
 - c. Write out and practice voicings for two more tunes
4. **Blues Form**
 - a. Memorize the jazz blues form in C, F, G, and B-flat
 - b. Write out and practice two-handed Type A/B Voicings in those four keys
 - c. Learn to play the blues heads "Blue Train" and "Blue Monk" with chords from *The Real Book*.
5. **Comping Variations – practice incorporating lead-ins, push-offs, and long-short articulations as you practice your voicings for ii-V-I progressions and the blues form**
6. **Guided Listening 7: "Pie Eye's Blues" by Duke Ellington**
 - a. Listen at least twenty times
 - b. Follow the blues form throughout "Pie Eye's Blues"
 - c. Listen for the use of different instruments in the big band

Unit 8

Playing Bass in Two



Scan Here for
Unit 8 Videos

Improvisation Exercise 8 – Call-and-Response Phrasing 1

Phrasing is an important part of being a good improviser. Having a variety of models to guide you regarding when to play and when to rest can help you discover new avenues for improvisation. Practicing phrasing can also help you to figure out how to integrate your left-hand comping with your right-hand improvisation.

This week, practice two common phrasing models based on the principles of call and response. In the **Play One, Rest One** model, your right hand plays one measure and then rests for one measure as the left hand comps. For the **Play Two, Rest Two** model, the right hand plays two measures before resting two measures for left-hand comping.

When practicing these models, you should be accurate, but you don't need to be precise. It is totally acceptable to start and end your phrases a little before or after the prescribed downbeat. Use this exercise to practice comping variations as demonstrated in the examples below, which use both the E-flat major scale and the E-flat blues scale.

Play One, Rest One

Fm⁷ Bb⁷ Ebmaj⁷

Reverse Charleston

Charleston with push-off on beat 1

Fm⁷ Bb⁷ Ebmaj⁷

Charleston - long-short

Reverse Charleston - lead in on beat 4

Play Two, Rest Two

Chords: Fm^7 , Bb^7 , $Ebmaj^7$

Charleston - lead-in on “and of 3”

Reverse Charleston - long-short

Reverse Charleston

Charleston - push-off on the “and of two”

Practice improvising over ii-V-I’s in E-flat, A-flat, and D major. You can use the major scale of the tonic key or the blues scale of the tonic key for your improvisations.

ii-V-I Lick 6 (Blues)

ii-V-I Lick 6 is written to fit with the V chord of a long-form ii-V-I, although the same lick could be used in any measure of a ii-V-I. Like the previous lick, this one uses double notes and turns.

Chords: G^7 , $Cmaj^7$

Whereas the last lick focused on the “regular” blues scale, this lick uses the **sweet scale** that was discussed in the previous chapter’s frequently asked questions. The sweet scale is composed of root, second, flat third, normal third, fifth, and sixth as compared to the major scale.

Sweet Scale in C

Sweet Scale in F

Sweet Scale in D

Notice that ii-V-I Lick 6 mainly uses the sweet scale but borrows the F on beat four from the regular blues scale. It is common to mix between the two scales when playing the blues.

Basslines in Two

In jazz, **basslines** are melodies that establish the root of the chord and the strong beats of the measure. If there is no bass player in a group, it is often up to the pianist to play the bassline. It is typically expected that pianists play basslines when they accompany singers or other instrumentalists in a duo setting.

A **bassline in two** is composed of half notes. Bassists generally play in two for more relaxed tempos or at the beginning of pieces before moving into the more-energetic **walking bass feel**, which is made up of quarter notes.

Bassists study their whole lives to play basslines that are melodically rich, varied, and support the harmony of a tune. For now, you will start with simple formulas that you can mix to create basic basslines in two.

1. If the chords change every half note, play the root of each chord.

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷ Fmaj⁷ Bbm⁷ Eb⁷ Abmaj⁷ Dbmaj⁷

root root root root root root root root

8^{vb}

2. If the chords change every measure, do one of the following:

- a. Play the root of the chord on the downbeat and the fifth on beat three.

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

root fifth root fifth root fifth root fifth

8^{vb}

- b. Play the root of the chord on the downbeat and the third on beat three.

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

root third root third root third root third

8^{vb}

- c. Play the root of the chord on the downbeat and a chromatic neighbor (either higher or lower) to the next root on beat three.

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

root neighbor root neighbor root neighbor root third

8^{vb}

to G to C to C

Notice that basslines can either ascend or descend when moving from beat one to beat three. Because of the voice leading patterns in the circle of fifths, it often makes the most sense to alternate between ascending and descending. Basslines should be played legato, without any space in between notes.

Note how low on the piano these basslines should be played (take the 8vb signs seriously!). Many pianists make the mistake of playing basslines too high, but they should be played just about as low as possible on the instrument. The lowest string of the bass is equivalent to the lowest E on the piano and the strings move up in fourths to A, D, and G. Use those four notes as a guide to roughly determine how low you should play your bassline. From this point forward, this book will no longer be writing “8vb” for each bassline, but please assume that you should play all basslines an octave below where they are written.

Practice mixing freely between these three formulas on a blues form. If you stick to only one formula, your bassline might be boring and predictable. Below, you will find one possible version of a bassline in two for a blues in E-flat.

Avoid playing the same note twice in a row because it is not very melodically satisfying. For example, in measure two, avoid playing the fifth of the A-flat dominant seventh chord, E-flat, on beat three because the next note will be E-flat as the root of the E-flat dominant seventh chord. If you must repeat a pitch, repeat it in different octaves to mask the repetition.

The musical score is written in bass clef with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. It consists of three lines of music, each containing two measures. The first line begins with a 4/4 time signature and a key signature of three flats. The chords are Eb7, Ab7, and Eb7. The notes are labeled as root, third, root, third, root, fifth, root, and neighbor to A. The second line starts with a measure rest labeled '5' and the chord Ab7. The notes are labeled as root, third, root, neighbor to Eb, root, third, root, and neighbor to F. The third line starts with a measure rest labeled '9' and the chord Fm7. The notes are labeled as root, fifth, root, third, root, fifth, root, and root. The score ends with a double bar line.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *All of these formulas have the root on beat one of every measure. Is there ever a time when I can play something other than the root on the downbeat?*

A: Yes! If you are itching to play something other than the root, a great place to try it is when a chord lasts for more than one measure. For example, in measures three and four of the blues on the previous page, it would be acceptable to play the E-flat only once, on the downbeat of measure three. Two good formulas for this scenario are to play **root-second-third-root**, which always works, or to use a **walk up**, a formula of ascending whole step, half step, half step, which works if the chords are moving in the circle of fifths.

Root-Second-Third-Root
Eb⁷

Walk Up
Eb⁷ (leads to Ab)

root second third root

whole step half step half step

8^{vb}

Q: *I know you said that E is the lowest string of the bass. Are we allowed to go below that on the piano?*

A: Yes, absolutely. There is no need to limit our range as piano players to the range of the bass. That said, going all the way down to the lowest three or four notes on the piano is probably going to sound too low and uncharacteristic of the bass sound. I would stay at the lowest C or above.

Q: *Why do we play legato? Don't bassists play pizzicato, which would sound short?*

A: You are correct that bassists play pizzicato, but the strings on the bass are so long that a single pluck lasts for a really long time. Even though bassists pluck their strings, the resulting sound is legato.

One-Handed Type A/B Voicings

For the past two units, you have been practicing Type A/B voicings that require both hands. These voicings are appropriate when other instruments are playing both the bassline and the melody of the piece.

This unit, you will learn a version of these voicings that is appropriate to play with just one hand. These **one-handed type A/B voicings** can be played in the right hand while the left hand is playing a bassline, or they can be played in the left hand while the right hand is playing a melody or improvising.

Instead of four notes, when playing these voicings, you will only play three notes, the third and seventh plus either the ninth or the fifth. Many of the rules you learned regarding two-handed voicings still apply:

- Type A voicings still have the third on bottom and Type B voicings still have the seventh on bottom.
- No matter which hand you use to play these voicings, keep the lowest note of the voicing between C3 and C4.
- Alternating between Type A and Type B will create the smoothest voice leading for a ii-V-I progression.

The formulas for the voicings are as follows:

| Type A | Type B |
|--------|--------|
| 9 | 5 |
| 7 | 3 |
| 3 | 7 |

Here are some examples of one-handed Type A/B voicings for a variety of chords:

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Cm ⁷ | Gm ⁷ | A ⁷ | F ⁷ | E ^b maj ⁷ | B ^b ⁷ | G ⁷ |
| | | | | | | |
| Type A | Type B | Type B | Type A | Type B | Type B | Type A |

Write out the voicings indicated on the next page. Pay close attention to the range, making sure to keep the lowest note between C3 and C4. Even though you will eventually play these voicings in one hand, a grand staff has been provided to avoid excessive ledger lines. The first three voicings are done for you.

Fm⁷ Dmaj⁷ G⁷ C⁷ A^bmaj⁷ Dm⁷ E⁷

Type A Type B Type B Type A Type B Type B Type A

8 Amaj⁷ B^b7 Gm⁷ Cmaj⁷ F⁷ B^bmaj⁷ Am⁷

Type B Type A Type A Type A Type B Type A Type B

15 Em⁷ Fmaj⁷ Cm⁷ A⁷ A^b7 D^bmaj⁷ E^bmaj⁷

Type A Type B Type B Type A Type B Type A Type A

22 Dmaj⁷ B^bm7 Fmaj⁷ G^b7 Amaj⁷ C[#]7 Bmaj⁷

Type B Type A Type A Type B Type A Type B Type A

ii-V-I Exercise

As with two-handed Type A/B voicings, alternating between the Type A and Type B forms will create the smoothest voice leading for ii-V-I's.

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

Type A Type B Type A Type B Type A Type B

Practice the familiar ii-V-I exercise below starting on both Type A and Type B voicings. Play the voicing in the right hand while playing the root in the left hand. If you are ready, play a bassline in two instead of holding the root.

A

ii-V-I in C Major ii-V-I in B^b Major

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷ Cm⁷ F⁷ B^bmaj⁷

Type A Type B Type A Type A Type B Type A

ii-V-I in A^b Major ii-V-I in G^b Major

9 B^bm⁷ E^b⁷ A^bmaj⁷ A^bm⁷ D^b⁷ G^bmaj⁷

Type A Type B Type A Type A Type B Type A

ii-V-I in E Major ii-V-I in D Major

17 F[#]m⁷ B⁷ E[#]maj⁷ E[#]m⁷ A⁷ D[#]maj⁷

Type A Type B Type A Type A Type B Type A

B

ii-V-I in C Major

ii-V-I in B^b MajorDm⁷G⁷Cmaj⁷Cm⁷F⁷B^bmaj⁷

Type B Type A Type B Type B Type A Type B

ii-V-I in A^b Majorii-V-I in G^b Major9 B^bm⁷E^b7A^bmaj⁷A^bm⁷D^b7G^bmaj⁷

Type B Type A Type B Type B Type A Type B

ii-V-I in E Major

ii-V-I in D Major

17 F[#]m⁷B⁷E^{maj7}E^{m7}A⁷D^{maj7}

Type B Type A Type B Type B Type A Type B

C

ii-V-I in D^b Major ii-V-I in B Major

Ebm⁷ Ab⁷ Dbmaj⁷ C#m⁷ F#⁷ Bmaj⁷

Type A Type B Type A Type A Type B Type A

9 ii-V-I in A Major ii-V-I in G Major

Bm⁷ E⁷ Amaj⁷ Am⁷ D⁷ Gmaj⁷

Type A Type B Type A Type A Type B Type A

17 ii-V-I in F Major ii-V-I in E^b Major

Gm⁷ C⁷ Fmaj⁷ Fm⁷ Bb⁷ Ebmaj⁷

Type A Type B Type A Type A Type B Type A

D

ii-V-I in D^b Major

ii-V-I in B Major

E^bm⁷

A^b7

D^bmaj⁷

C[#]m⁷

F[#]7

Bmaj⁷

Type B Type A Type B Type B Type A Type B

ii-V-I in A Major

ii-V-I in G Major

9

Bm⁷

E⁷

Amaj⁷

Am⁷

D⁷

Gmaj⁷

Type B Type A Type B Type B Type A Type B

ii-V-I in F Major

ii-V-I in E^b Major

17

Gm⁷

C⁷

Fmaj⁷

Fm⁷

B^b7

E^bmaj⁷

Type B Type A Type B Type B Type A Type B

Practice the blues form in E-flat, F, and B-flat, playing a bassline in two in the left hand and holding or comping one-handed shell voicings in the right hand. Playing the bass and one-handed shell voicings makes a great accompaniment for a singer or horn player. The example below provides one possibility. Remember to play the bassline an octave lower than written.

The exercise consists of three systems of four measures each, totaling 12 measures. The right hand (RH) plays one-handed shell voicings, and the left hand (LH) plays a bassline. The key signature is E-flat major (three flats: Bb, Eb, Ab).

- Measures 1-4:** RH: Eb7 (Bb3, Eb4, Gb4, Bb4); LH: Bb2, Eb3, Ab3, Bb3.
- Measures 5-8:** RH: Ab7 (Bb3, Ab4, Cb5, Eb5); LH: Bb2, Eb3, Ab3, Bb3.
- Measures 9-12:** RH: Bb7 (Bb3, Ab4, Cb5, Eb5); LH: Bb2, Eb3, Ab3, Bb3.

Blues Improvisation

Improvising over the blues is an artform unto itself. Great blues players mix influences and styles to tell complex stories over a simple chord progression. This section will give you a few suggestions to get started.

An **AAB blues form** is a key part of the blues tradition. When playing an AAB blues, start by improvising a simple melodic phrase for four measures. This will be your “A” phrase. Remember and repeat this improvisation in the middle four measures. Then improvise a contrasting phrase, your “B” phrase, for the final four measures. To make the “B” phrase a substantive contrast, think about some different aspects of music:

- If your “A” phrase has long notes, use short notes in your “B” phrase.
- If your “A” phrase descends, make your “B” phrase ascend.
- If your “A” phrase starts on an F, try starting somewhere different for your “B” phrase.

Not only does an AAB blues make for a compelling and logical improvisation, but it also provides a great opportunity to check whether you are truly listening to yourself as you play. For both practical and musical reasons, don’t try to fill all four measures of your improvisation. Instead, use the Play One, Rest One or Play Two, Rest Two phrase models, leaving ample space between your phrases.

Use the blues scale when creating an AAB blues. The blues scale is appropriate because it fits with the entire form of the blues, not just one particular chord. An example is given below.

The musical notation is in F major (one flat) and 4/4 time. It illustrates an AAB blues form over a 12-measure progression.

System 1 (Measures 1-4): Labeled "A" Phrase. Chords: F⁷ (measures 1-2), B^b7 (measures 3-4). The melody starts on F4, moves to G4, A4, Bb4, C5, D5, E5, and ends on F5.

System 2 (Measures 5-8): Labeled "A" Phrase Repeated. Chords: B^b7 (measures 5-6), F⁷ (measures 7-8). The melody repeats the first four measures of the first system.

System 3 (Measures 9-12): Labeled Contrasting "B" Phrase. Chords: Gm⁷ (measures 9-10), C⁷ (measures 11-12). The melody starts on G4, moves to A4, Bb4, C5, D5, E5, and ends on F5. The final measure (12) has a double bar line.

Besides improvising using the blues scale, you can also use the arpeggios of each individual chord. First, practice 3-5-7-9 arpeggios as you did in Improvisation Exercise 6B.

Three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, key of F major. Each staff contains four measures of 3-5-7-9 arpeggios for a specific chord. The first staff shows F7 and Bb7. The second staff shows Bb7 and F7. The third staff shows Gm7, C7, F7, and a pair of (Gm7, C7). The notes are: F7 (F, Ab, C, Eb), Bb7 (Bb, Db, F, Ab), Gm7 (Bb, Db, F, Ab), and C7 (F, Ab, C, Eb).

Practice some variations of the 3-5-7-9 arpeggio in the blues form. The variations can start on a different note, change directions, repeat notes, change the rhythm, or add neighbor tone lead-ins. Practice these variations and create your own. Here are a few options:

Four staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, key of F major, each showing a variation of the F7 3-5-7-9 arpeggio. Above each staff is a box describing the variation. Below each staff are the notes and any special markings.

| Start from Ninth, Going Down | Change of Rhythm | Change of Direction | Add a Neighbor Tone |
|------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| F7 | F7 | F7 | F7 |
| 9 7 5 3 | 3 5 7 9 7 | 3 9 7 5 | NT 3 5 7 9 9 |

Next, invert some of the arpeggios so that they voice lead smoothly from one chord to the next. The example below shows a blues form with some arpeggios placed in inversions.

Example of a blues form with arpeggios in inversions. The notation is in 4/4 time, key of F major (one flat). The chords and their corresponding arpeggio fingerings are as follows:

- Measure 1: F7 (3 5 7 9)
- Measure 2: Bb7 (7 9 3 5)
- Measure 3: F7 (3 5 7 9)
- Measure 4: F7 (3 5 7 9)
- Measure 5: Bb7 (7 9 3 5)
- Measure 6: Bb7 (7 9 3 5)
- Measure 7: F7 (3 5 7 9)
- Measure 8: F7 (3 5 7 9)
- Measure 9: Gm7 (3 5 7 9)
- Measure 10: C7 (7 9 3 5)
- Measure 11: F7 (3 5 7 9)
- Measure 12: (Gm7 C7) (3 5 7 9 7 9 3 5)

Now, improvise solos over the blues form using only arpeggios. The key to making this sound musical is to create longer phrases, connecting between the arpeggios of different measures. Notes on the “and of four” frequently anticipate the arpeggio of the next measure. An example is given below:

Example of a blues form with arpeggios and anticipations. The notation is in 4/4 time, key of F major (one flat). The chords and their corresponding arpeggio fingerings are as follows:

- Measure 1: F7 (9 7 5 3 7) - Note 7 anticipates Bb7
- Measure 2: Bb7 (5 3 5) - Note 5 anticipates F7
- Measure 3: F7 (9 7 5 3 R 7)
- Measure 4: Bb7 (3 9 7 5 3 5 7 5)
- Measure 5: Bb7 (3 5 7 5)
- Measure 6: F7 (3 5 7 9 9 7 7 5 5 3 3)
- Measure 7: F7 (3 5 7 9 7 5 3 5 7 R) - Note R anticipates Gm7
- Measure 8: F7 (3 5 7 9 7 5 3 5 7 R)
- Measure 9: Gm7 (3 5 7)
- Measure 10: C7 (7 3 5)
- Measure 11: F7 (3 9 7 5 3 5 7 R)
- Measure 12: (Gm7 C7) (3 5 7 9 7 5 3 5 7 R)

Finally, practice combining arpeggios and the blues scale in the same improvisation. At first, you can plan out your phrases to have two four-measure phrases of arpeggio-based improvisation and one four-measure phrase of blues scale-based improvisation. Practice using the blues scale at different points in the blues form. Practice using the Play One, Rest One and Play Two, Rest Two phrase models to keep your improvisation organized. In the two-chorus example below, the blues scale-based improvisation is placed in the middle phrase in the first chorus and then in the final phrase in the second chorus.

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of two choruses, each eight measures long. The key signature has one flat (Bb).

- Measure 1:** Chord F7. Arpeggio-based improvisation.
- Measure 2:** Chord Bb7. Arpeggio-based improvisation.
- Measure 3:** Chord F7. Arpeggio-based improvisation.
- Measure 4:** Chord F7. Arpeggio-based improvisation.
- Measure 5:** Chord Bb7. Blues scale-based improvisation.
- Measure 6:** Chord F7. Blues scale-based improvisation.
- Measure 7:** Chord Gm7. Blues scale-based improvisation.
- Measure 8:** Chord C7. Blues scale-based improvisation.
- Measure 9:** Chord Gm7. Arpeggio-based improvisation.
- Measure 10:** Chord C7. Arpeggio-based improvisation.
- Measure 11:** Chord F7. Arpeggio-based improvisation.
- Measure 12:** Chord Gm7. Arpeggio-based improvisation.
- Measure 13:** Chord C7. Arpeggio-based improvisation.
- Measure 14:** Chord F7. Arpeggio-based improvisation.
- Measure 15:** Chord Bb7. Arpeggio-based improvisation.
- Measure 16:** Chord F7. Arpeggio-based improvisation.
- Measure 17:** Chord Bb7. Arpeggio-based improvisation.
- Measure 18:** Chord F7. Arpeggio-based improvisation.
- Measure 19:** Chord Gm7. Blues scale-based improvisation.
- Measure 20:** Chord C7. Blues scale-based improvisation.
- Measure 21:** Chord F7. Blues scale-based improvisation.
- Measure 22:** Chord Gm7. Blues scale-based improvisation.
- Measure 23:** Chord C7. Blues scale-based improvisation.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *I'm doing everything you suggested and it doesn't sound bad...but it doesn't sound like jazz. What's wrong?*

A: Well, it is hard to tell you exactly without hearing you play, but the biggest problems I hear from students at this stage all have to do with rhythm and articulation. I would check the following aspects:

- How is your swing articulation? Are you heavy on the downbeats or are you doing a good job accenting your “doo-VAHs?” Make sure to really listen instead of going by feel. In my experience, even very smart students think they are getting the accents correct but in fact are accenting the downbeats.
- Where are you starting and ending your phrases? Remember from the Building Your Rhythmic Vocabulary sections that in jazz, we start and end most phrases on offbeats rather than on the beat. If your playing feels too “square,” place more of your phrase beginnings and endings on offbeats.
- Check your hand to make sure that you are utilizing a variety of hand positions and therefore improvising melodies with diverse intervals and shapes.
- Include grace notes, turns, and double notes. These simple ornaments can solidify the sense of jazz style.

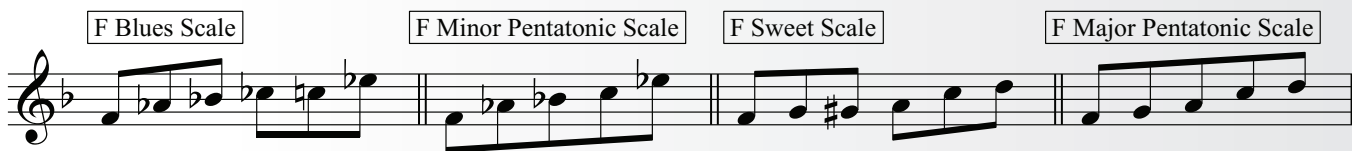
We have quite a lot of color to add in the next few chapters. If you have a really discerning ear, you might be missing some of those colors. Be patient!

Q: *Some of these notes sound really bad to me against the chords. Am I doing it wrong?*

A: It is possible that you are doing it wrong, but I find that the dissonances created by the blues scale change character depending on the tempo. If you dwell on them at a slow tempo as you are practicing, they will sound highly dissonant. As you play at more medium tempos, you will find these dissonances are not too strident. However, remember that even in the blues we like dissonances to resolve, so be conscientious about how and where you are ending your phrases. When in doubt, end your phrase on the tonic note, which will always feel resolved.

Q: *I was told to use pentatonic scales to improvise over the blues. Was that wrong?*

A: No! Actually, pentatonic scales are five-note versions of the blues scale and the sweet scale. The minor pentatonic scale is the blues scale without the raised fourth. The major pentatonic scale is like the sweet scale without the raised second. The diagram below demonstrates the difference.

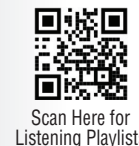


Q: *I really like the sound of the sweet scale. Can I use it just like the blues scale?*

A: Not quite! The biggest difference is that as the blues progression moves to the IV chord, you have to change keys and improvise with the sweet scale based on the IV chord.

GUIDED LISTENING 8 –

“D. & E.” by Oscar Peterson



“D. & E.”, a piece composed by pianist John Lewis, is the eighth track from the Oscar Peterson album, *We Get Requests*.

Oscar Peterson (1925-2007) was a Canadian jazz piano virtuoso and influential jazz pianist. Known for his light touch, incredibly fast technique, and penchant for the blues, Peterson released over 200 albums ranging from orchestral suites to solo piano romps. His long-standing trio consisted of bassist Ray Brown and drummer Ed Thigpen. While both players are excellent, **Ray Brown (1926-2002)** deserves special mention as one of the best and most influential bassists ever, performing with a wide range of musicians from Peterson and John Lewis (who composed this piece), to bebop greats Bud Powell and Dizzy Gillespie. He also led his own trios which nurtured the careers of many of the best pianists of the late twentieth century including Benny Green, Geoffrey Keezer, and Larry Fuller.

PERSONNEL

Oscar Peterson, piano

Ray Brown, bass

Ed Thigpen, drums

Form

0:00-0:49 Head In (twelve-bar blues, twice)

0:49-3:32 Piano Solo (7 choruses)

3:32-4:18 Shout Chorus (twice)

4:18-end Head Out (twice)

“D. & E.” is a great track to appreciate great bass playing, including some bass in two, as well as to study the mixture of blues scale-based improvising with arpeggio improvising.

Focus on the bass first. Brown improvises responses to Peterson’s calls in the first chorus, plays a bassline consisting of mostly long notes in the second chorus, and then settles into a bassline in two for the beginning of the piano solo at 0:49. Notice all the variation and personality that Brown puts into his bassline. Every measure is a little bit different. He uses lots of eighth-note pickups to the notes on the strong beats and even plays short fills when Peterson rests. It is truly artful! Notice that Brown goes into a walking bass feel in the third chorus of the solo, around 1:40, just as Thigpen changes from playing with brushes to playing with sticks. It is a common custom to simultaneously change to a four feel in the bass and sticks in the drums to increase the energy and change the feel in the middle of a longer solo.

Listen to all the grace notes, double notes, and turns that Peterson uses. Throughout this solo, you can hear him use both the sweet scale and the regular blues scale. Focus on the chorus starting at 2:23. Peterson starts by repeating the flatted third, the most distinctive note of the blues scale. He then expands to play the blues scale up and down in triplets before allowing the scale to bloom into a jubilant phrase of double notes and turns. Then, starting at 2:38, Peterson plays arpeggios, clearly outlining the chords.

Finally, notice the shout chorus. A **shout chorus**, a term usually associated with big bands, indicates the climactic moment of the piece, which usually features extended drum fills. Here, Peterson’s trio imitates a big band with Peterson playing the role of brass by playing big block chords and Thigpen providing the drum fills. For the repetition of the shout chorus, Peterson plays the same figure but moves his right hand up an octave to provide a different texture, perhaps simulating different instrumentation.

UNIT 8 ASSIGNMENTS

- 1. Improvisation Exercise – practice Play One, Rest One and Play Two, Rest Two while improvising over ii-V-I's in in E-flat, A-flat, and D major**
- 2. Learn ii-V-I Lick 6 in all twelve keys and apply to tunes**
- 3. Practice playing a bassline in two for at least three different pieces from *The Real Book***
- 4. Practice your one-handed Type A/B Voicings**
 - a. Complete the written practice
 - b. Practice the ii-V-I exercise (play a bassline in two in your left hand if you are ready)
 - c. Practice comping on a blues form in E-flat, F, and B-flat while playing a bassline in two in the left hand
- 5. Practice improvising over a blues form as follows:**
 - a. Practice improvising an AAB blues with the blues scale
 - b. Practice arpeggios
 - i. 3-5-7-9
 - ii. Variations of 3-5-7-9
 - iii. Inversions for better voice leading
 - iv. Improvising using arpeggios
 - c. Practice mixing blues scale with scales and arpeggios
- 6. Guided Listening 8: “D. and E.” by Oscar Peterson**
 - a. Listen to “D. and E.” at least twenty times
 - b. Focus on Ray Brown’s bassline in two
 - c. Study Oscar Peterson’s mixture of blues scales, scales, and arpeggios

Unit 9

Blues for Sammie



Scan Here for
Unit 9 Videos

Improvisation Exercise 9 – Call-and-Response Phrasing 2

This week, continue practicing Play One, Rest One and Play Two, Rest Two phrasing with the two variations below. Comp in your left hand using one-handed Type A/B voicings.

1. Practice starting your phrases at different points in the ii-V-I progression.

- For Play One, Rest One, comp in the left hand in measures one and three and improvise in the right hand in measures two and four.
- For Play Two, Rest Two, start your two-measure phrase in the second, third, and fourth measure of the four-measure phrase.

Practice improvising over ii-V-I progressions in G, A, and B-flat major. In your improvisations, feel free to use the major scale of the tonic key, 3-5-7-9 arpeggios, and the blues scale of the tonic key.

Play One, Rest One

Am⁷ D⁷ Gmaj⁷

Reverse Charleston,
Type B voicing

Charleston, long-short
Type B voicing

Am⁷ D⁷ Gmaj⁷

Charleston w/push-off,
Type A voicing

Reverse Charleston w/push-off,
Type A voicing

Play Two, Rest Two

Am⁷ D⁷ Gmaj⁷

starts in second measure of four-measure phrase

Reverse Charleston, long-short, Type B voicing

Reverse Charleston w/push-off Type B voicing

Am⁷ D⁷ Gmaj⁷

starts in third measure of four-measure phrase

Charleston w/push-off, Type A voicing

Reverse Charleston, Type B voicing

Am⁷ D⁷ Gmaj⁷ Am⁷ etc.

starts in fourth measure of four-measure phrase

Charleston, long-short Type A voicing

Reverse Charleston w/push-off, Type B voicing

2. Practice creating eight-measure phrases mixing Play One, Rest One with Play Two, Rest Two. Here are a few ideas:

- Play four measures of Play One, Rest One (two times total) then four measures of Play Two, Rest Two (one time total)
- Start with two measures of Play One, Rest One (once through), play four measures of Play Two, Rest Two (once through), and then end with Play One, Rest One (once through)
- Start with four measures of Play Two, Rest Two (once through), then play four measures of Play One, Rest One (two times total)

A

play one, rest one play one, rest one

Cm7 Bbmaj7

Reverse Charleston,
Type B voicing Charleston, long-short
Type A voicing

play two, rest two

Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7

Charleston w/push-off,
Type A voicing Reverse Charleston
w/push-off,
Type A voicing

B

play one, rest one play two, rest two

Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7

Reverse Charleston,
long-short,
Type B voicing

play one, rest one

Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7

Charleston w/push-off,
Type A voicing

Reverse Charleston,
Type B voicing

Reverse Charleston
w/push-off,
Type A voicing

play one, rest one (left hand first)

C

Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7

Charleston, long-short
Type A voicing

Reverse Charleston w/push-off,
Type A voicing

play two, rest two

Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7

Reverse Charleston,
Type A voicing

Charleston, w/push-off,
Type A voicing

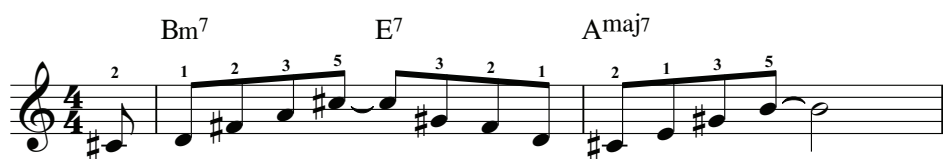
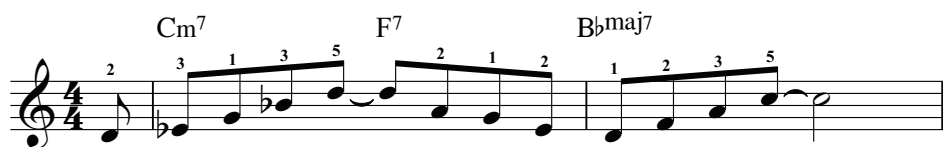
ii-V-I Lick 7

ii-V-I Lick 7 is a short-form ii-V-I lick designed to solidify the work you did with arpeggios in the last unit. Remember that 3-5-7-9 arpeggios can be played in inversions in order to create smooth voice leading and convenient hand positions.

Dm7 G7 Cmaj7

Here, the thirteenth (sixth) substitutes for the fifth of the dominant chord. As you will learn later, substituting the **thirteenth** for the fifth is a common practice that adds more color to a dominant or major seventh chord.

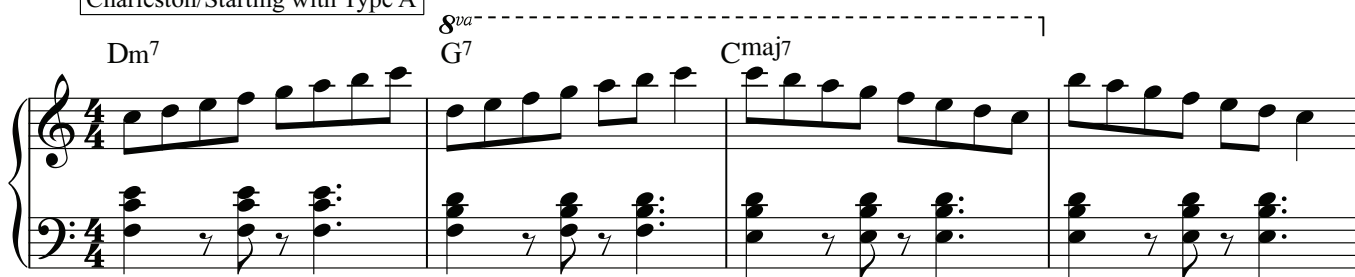
The trickiest thing about this lick is the fingering. While it might be tempting to use your thumb twice in a row, instead practice crossing over your thumb with your second finger to connect with a smooth legato. The fingering for three different keys is given below. Avoid using the same finger twice in a row as you work through the fingerings for other keys.



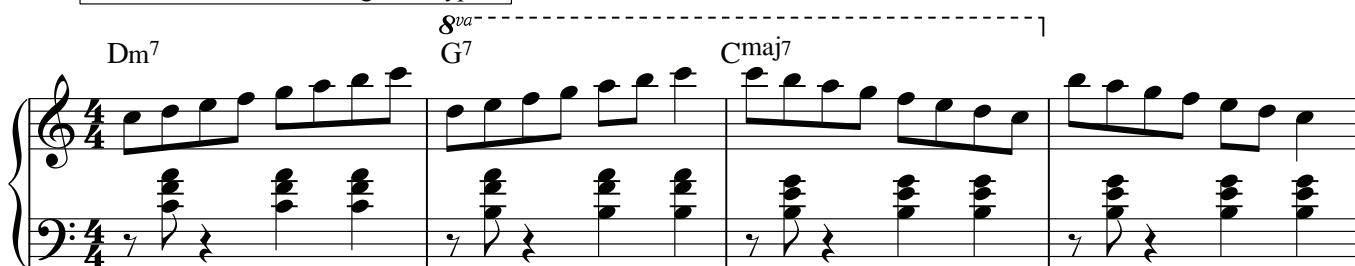
Coordination Exercise 5

Practice playing your scales while comping with one-handed Type A/B voicings in all keys, as written below. This is a great opportunity to practice adding lead-ins to your comping.

Charleston/Starting with Type A



Reverse Charleston/Starting with Type B



Learning a Blues Tune

Like Unit 5, this unit will work through the steps you should take when learning a tune. You will be learning an original blues piece called “Blues for Sammie” (named for the author’s black lab). Note that “Blues for Sammie” adds a few more chords to the blues form you have already learned, including a ii-V progression in measure four and a dominant seventh chord in measure eight.

Blues for Sammie

Jeremy Siskind

The musical score for "Blues for Sammie" is written in 4/4 time and consists of 12 measures. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into three systems of four measures each. Measure numbers 1, 5, and 9 are indicated at the start of their respective systems. Chord symbols are placed above the staff: F⁷ (measures 1, 5, 9), B^b7 (measures 2, 6), F⁷ (measures 3, 7), C^m7 (measure 4), D⁷ (measure 8), and (G^m7 C⁷) (measures 10-11). The melody includes several triplet markings (indicated by a '3' below the notes) in measures 2, 6, 10, and 11. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots in measure 12.

Notice that “Blues for Sammie” is an AAB blues with a slight alteration. Since the A on the downbeat of measure one isn’t from the blues scale, it needs to be changed to an A-flat on the downbeat of measure five to match the B-flat dominant seventh chord.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Are blues tunes considered contrafacts?

A: Great question! Although blues tunes match the technical definition for a contrafact, because they comprise new melodies written over an established chord progression, we don't usually think of them as contrafacts because there isn't a notable original source for the chords. Instead, the blues is thought of as a standard chord progression.

The steps you should take when learning this tune are listed below. Many should sound familiar to you from Unit 5:

1. Learn the melody in the right hand with good swing articulation while holding the roots in the left hand.
2. Practice personalizing the melody using grace notes, ghost notes, double notes, repeated notes, and turns. Below, you will find one possible embellishment.

Blues for Sammie

Jeremy Siskind

The musical score for "Blues for Sammie" is written in 4/4 time and consists of three staves of music. The first staff contains measures 1-4 with chords F7, Bb7, F7, Cm7, and F7. The second staff contains measures 5-8 with chords Bb7, F7, and D7. The third staff contains measures 9-12 with chords Gm7, C7, F7, and (Gm7 C7). The melody features various embellishments including triplets and grace notes.

3. Play the melody in the right hand (with some personalization) with a bass in two in the left hand. Manuscript has been provided below for you to write out your bassline, if necessary.

Blues for Sammie

Jeremy Siskind

Chords: F⁷ B^b7 F⁷ C^m7 F⁷

Chords: B^b7 F⁷ D⁷

Chords: G^m7 C⁷ F⁷ (G^m7 C⁷)

4. Practice two-handed Type A/B voicings, writing them out if necessary in the blank manuscript provided below. Practice comping using Charleston, Reverse Charleston, and variations.

Blues for Sammie

Jeremy Siskind

F⁷ B \flat ⁷ F⁷ C \flat m⁷ F⁷

5 B \flat ⁷ F⁷ D⁷

9 G \flat m⁷ C⁷ F⁷ (G \flat m⁷ C⁷)

5. Figure out your one-handed Type A/B voicings, writing them out if necessary on the blank manuscript provided below. Note that even though the voicings will be played in one hand only, staff paper with both a treble and bass staff has been provided as the voicings tend to span the middle range between the treble and bass staves.

Blues for Sammie

Jeremy Siskind

F⁷ B^b7 F⁷ C^m7 F⁷

5 B^b7 F⁷ D⁷

9 G^m7 C⁷ F⁷ (G^m7 C⁷)

6. Practice comping with one-handed voicings in the right hand while playing a bassline in two in the left hand. Manuscript is provided for you below. If you can do this without writing out the bass, that's great!

Keep the voicings in the same place on the piano, with the lowest note between C3 and C4 even as you play them with your right hand. You are leaving space for the melody.

Blues for Sammie

Jeremy Siskind

Chord progression for "Blues for Sammie" (4/4 time):

Measures 1-4: F⁷ B^b7 F⁷ C^m7 F⁷

Measures 5-8: B^b7 F⁷ D⁷

Measures 9-12: G^m7 C⁷ F⁷ (G^m7 C⁷)

The manuscript consists of three systems of empty musical staves. Each system includes a grand staff (treble and bass clef) and a separate bass line staff. The chord progression is indicated by symbols above the measures: F⁷, B^b7, F⁷, C^m7, F⁷ for measures 1-4; B^b7, F⁷, D⁷ for measures 5-8; and G^m7, C⁷, F⁷, (G^m7 C⁷) for measures 9-12. The piece ends with a double bar line at the end of measure 12.

7. Practice comping with one-handed voicings in the left hand while playing the melody in the right hand. Blank manuscript has been provided for you. Strive to keep both hands in their correct range. Keep the voicings in the same register with the lowest note between C3 and C4 regardless of which hand is comping. If you have issues with hand overlap, see the FAQ section on the next page.

Blues for Sammie

Jeremy Siskind

First system of music for "Blues for Sammie". The right hand (treble clef) contains a melody in 4/4 time, starting with a repeat sign. The left hand (bass clef) contains a blank staff for comping. Chord voicings are indicated above and below the staff: F⁷, B^b7, F⁷, C^m7, F⁷.

Second system of music (measures 5-8). The right hand continues the melody. The left hand contains a blank staff for comping. Chord voicings are indicated above and below the staff: B^b7, F⁷, D⁷.

Third system of music (measures 9-12). The right hand continues the melody. The left hand contains a blank staff for comping. Chord voicings are indicated above and below the staff: G^m7, C⁷, F⁷, (G^m7 C⁷).

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *Help! My hands are crashing into each other. Should I move the melody up an octave?*

A: No. We generally resist changing the octave of a melody because we want to keep melodies in the range that they would be sung by a singer or played by a horn like a trumpet or saxophone.

If your hands are crashing into each other, you have a few options, which are listed below in order from easiest fixes to more complex solutions.

1. *Choose your comping rhythms wisely.* It is okay if your hands overlap a little as long as they don't play simultaneously. Get comfy having your thumbs share some territory and get strategic about comping. For example, in measure three, using a Reverse Charleston rather than a Charleston allows you to stick with a Type A voicing in the left hand.

| Good | Bad |
|--|--|
| <p>F7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Reverse Charleston rhythm falls in between melody notes</p> | <p>F7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Charleston rhythm arrives simultaneously w/melody notes</p> |

2. *Flip your voicing from Type A to Type B or vice versa.* Although maintaining good voice leading is a priority, sometimes you have to change your voicing type to make it work on the piano. Flip your voicing to a lower form when possible, to avoid a crash.

| Good | Bad |
|---|---|
| <p>F7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Type B</p> | <p>F7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Type A</p> |

3. *Leave off the top note.* Although it is nice to have a third note in the voicing, remember that the top note is not essential, it is providing optional color. As long as the third and seventh are present, the voicing will still work.

The image shows two musical examples for the F7 chord in 4/4 time. The first example, labeled 'Good', shows a piano accompaniment in the left hand (F, Bb, D) and a melody in the right hand (F, A, C). The second example, labeled 'Bad', shows a piano accompaniment in the left hand (F, Bb, D) and a melody in the right hand (F, A, C). The labels 'no top note' and 'with top note' are placed below the piano parts.

4. *Leave out a comp.* The two comping patterns you have learned both have two comps per measure, but there is no requirement to play twice per measure. Once per measure is just fine. If needed, leave out a comp and play only once per measure.
5. *Play the root and the seventh.* If all else fails, pianists can move their left hand into a lower position and comp using the root and the seventh instead of a Type A/B voicing. The root and the seventh should be played low in the range to avoid overlap with melodies.

The image shows a musical example for the F7 chord in 4/4 time. The piano part in the left hand plays the root (F) and seventh (Eb) in the bass, while the right hand plays a melody.

Improvising Over “Blues for Sammie”

From Unit 8, you are already familiar with exercises to prepare for improvising over a blues form. Practice these on “Blues for Sammie.” Remember, these include:

1. Creating an AAB blues using the blues scale
2. Practicing 3-5-7-9 arpeggios, placing some arpeggios in inversions to create smooth voice leading
3. Practicing intentionally mixing arpeggios and the blues scale
4. Incorporating ii-V-I licks and blues licks in the appropriate places

Remember that for dominant seventh chords, you can improvise using the mixolydian mode, which is a major scale with a lowered seventh. Minor seventh chords use a dorian mode, which is a major scale with a lowered third and seventh.

Practice these three scale exercises, which are similar to those you practiced on “Evening in Lyon.” In the first exercise, practice each mode ascending. In the second, practice each mode descending. In the last, practice each mode starting from the third scale degree. Remember to use the first, second, third, and fifth of the mode when the chords change twice per measure.

A

Exercise A shows ascending scale exercises in 4/4 time. The first line contains measures 1 through 4, with chords F7, Bb7, F7, Cm7, and F7. The second line contains measures 5 through 8, with chords Bb7, F7, and D7. The third line contains measures 9 through 12, with chords Gm7, C7, F7, and (Gm7 C7).

B

Exercise B shows descending scale exercises in 4/4 time. The first line contains measures 1 through 4, with chords F7, Bb7, F7, Cm7, and F7. The second line contains measures 5 through 8, with chords Bb7, F7, and D7. The third line contains measures 9 through 12, with chords Gm7, C7, F7, and (Gm7 C7).

C

1 **F7** **Bb7** **F7** **Cm7** **F7**

5 **Bb7** **F7** **D7** **D7**

9 **Gm7** **C7** **F7** **(Gm7 C7)**

Practice all of these exercises in the right hand with left-hand comping using Type A/B voicings and with the left hand playing a bassline in two. After mastering these exercises, practice improvising over “Blues for Sammie” using the notes of these scales. Then, mix in the scalar approach with the arpeggios and blues scales you’ve already practiced.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *The mixolydian mode for the D dominant seventh sounds weird to me. Why?*

A: Good ear! You are right that the mixolydian mode is actually a little off here. Buckle up for a nerdy theory explanation. If you are not interested, go ahead and skip this section. It is not crucial to your understanding right now.

The reason that the D mixolydian sounds a little weird is because the D dominant seventh is acting as a V of ii. The chord is actually borrowed from the key of G minor. Although we have not addressed minor harmony yet, you can probably figure out G minor necessitates a B-flat and, depending on which minor scale you choose, an E-flat. These two notes will make the mode sound more appropriate for the key. Minor harmony will be covered in the next level of this book series.

Putting it Together

Practice moving between these different elements in ways that will prepare you for real-world applications. Practice the following exercises with a metronome or play-along, without stopping between choruses. You might need to practice the transitions between choruses in isolation to master moving between elements

1. Accompanying in a Duo Setting

If you are accompanying a vocalist or horn player, it is up to you to play a bassline for the whole tune. Your left hand will play a bassline throughout and your right hand will comp while the other musician plays or sings.

- Comp in right hand while left hand plays bass in two (four choruses)
- Improvise in right hand while left hand plays bass in two (four choruses)
- Comp in right hand while left hand plays bass in two (two choruses)

2. Leading a Trio

A typical jazz **trio** consists of piano, bass, and drums. If you are leading a trio, you never have to worry about playing a bassline. Now, you should practice playing the melody and improvising in the right hand while your left hand comps. Practice two-handed comping as though you are accompanying a bass solo. Practice with an F blues play-along so that you can hear the bass.

- Play the melody in right hand while left hand comps (two choruses)
- Improvise in right hand while left hand comps (four choruses)
- Two-handed comping (two choruses)
- Play the melody in right hand while left hand comps (two choruses)

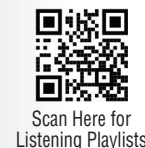
3. Playing in a Quartet

In a quartet, pianists do a lot of two-handed comping because the bassist covers the bassline and the fourth instrument is often serving the melodic role. Practice with an F blues play-along so that you can hear the bass.

- Two-handed comping (four choruses)
- Improvise in right hand while left hand comps (four choruses)
- Two-handed comping (two choruses)

GUIDED LISTENING 9 –

“Now’s the Time” by Charlie Parker



“Now’s the Time” is a blues head by Charlie Parker. The same recording can be found on multiple compilation albums, including as the first track of *The Essential Charlie Parker*.

Charlie Parker (1920-1955) nicknamed “Bird,” was an alto saxophonist who is the primary inventor of the bebop style. Remember from Unit 3 that bebop is a complex musical style that rose to prominence in the 1940s and 1950s. Bebop is known for difficult melodies, rich harmonies, fast tempos, and extended virtuosic improvisations. Bebop has become the primary language upon which modern jazz styles are based. Parker composed a huge number of pieces that have become jazz standards, many of them contrafacts, including “Blues for Alice,” “Donna Lee,” “Anthropology,” “Scrapple from the Apple,” “Confirmation,” “Billie’s Bounce,” and this tune, “Now’s the Time,” whose melody was later famously repurposed for a pop hit called “The Hucklebuck.”

PERSONNEL

Charlie Parker, alto saxophone

Sadik Hakim, piano

Curley Russell, bass

Max Roach, drums

Form

- 0:00-0:05 Introduction
- 0:05-0:35 Head In (Twelve-Bar Blues, Twice)
- 0:35-1:48 Saxophone Solo (Five Choruses)
- 1:48-2:15 Piano Solo (Two Choruses)
- 2:15-2:29 Bass Solo (One Chorus)
- 2:29-2:43 Drum Solo (One Chorus)
- 2:43-end Head Out (Twelve-Bar Blues, Once)

First, notice how much Parker varies the melody from the first statement to the second statement. Sing the melody for the first statement and see if you can remember it. Then, listen to the second statement of the melody, beginning at 0:20. Parker plays the first couple of measures, then departs from the melody with a completely different phrase. It is common for jazz musicians to alter the melody when it is played twice in a row.

Parker’s playing is a great study in mixing blues styles. At some points in his improvisation, the intricacies and virtuosity of the bebop style are prominent. At other times, Parker reminds the listener that he grew up in the rich blues tradition of Kansas City and plays “down-home” or “dirty” blues licks. Listen to Parker’s third chorus, starting at 1:03. His first lick is pure blues, including bending the pitch of the third scale degree to imitate a vocal inflection. Then, as he approaches the cadence (1:10-1:14), he plays a lengthy, windy scalar line that hits colorful notes, typical of bebop improvisation.

It is also worthwhile to listen to Max Roach’s drumming. Roach is one of the godfathers of bebop drumming and the same drummer who co-led the band with Clifford Brown on “Joy Spring” from Unit 2. Bebop drummers were known for **dropping bombs**, including accents large and small at unexpected places while accompanying soloists. Listen to the way that Roach aggressively uses the bass drum and snare drum to energize and catalyze the band.

UNIT 9 ASSIGNMENTS

- 1. Improvisation Exercise 9 – practice Play One, Rest One and Play Two, Rest Two phrasing variations in G, A, and B-flat major**
- 2. Practice ii-V-I Lick 7 in all twelve keys, paying special attention to fingering**
- 3. Practice Coordination Exercise 5 in all twelve keys**
- 4. Learn Blues for Sammie in the following ways:**
 - a. Playing the melody in the right hand while holding the roots in the left
 - b. Personalizing the melody using grace notes, ghost notes, double notes, repeated notes, and turns
 - c. Playing the melody (with some personalization) with a bass in two in the left hand
 - d. Comping using two-handed Type A/B voicings
 - e. Comping using one-handed Type A/B voicings
 - f. Comping with the one-handed voicings in the right hand while playing a bassline in two in the left hand
 - g. Comping with the one-handed voicings in the left hand while playing the melody in the right hand
- 5. Practice improvising over a blues in F by:**
 - a. Creating an AAB blues using the blues scale
 - b. Practicing 3-5-7-9 arpeggios, putting some in inversions to create smooth voice leading
 - c. Intentionally mixing arpeggios and the blues scale
 - d. Incorporating your ii-V-I licks and blues licks in the appropriate places
 - e. Practicing the mixolydian and dorian modes ascending, descending, and starting on the third scale degree
- 6. Practice putting elements together in the three ways discussed:**
 - a. Accompanying in a duo setting
 - b. Leading a trio
 - c. Playing in a quartet
- 7. Guided Listening 9: “Now’s the Time” by Charlie Parker**
 - a. Listen to “Now’s the Time” at least twenty times
 - b. Pay attention to Charlie Parker’s variations of the melody and his mixture of bluesy and bebop styles
 - c. Listen to Max Roach’s bebop drumming, especially the way he “drops bombs”

Unit 10

Introducing Altered Dominants



Scan Here for
Unit 10 Videos

Improvisation Exercise 10 – Play What You Sing

This week's improv practice focuses on connecting what you hear in your inner ear to what you play as you improvise. Don't skip this! Engaging your ear is a crucial part of growing as an improviser.

First, practice over a drone. As you hold a fifth in the left hand, sing a short phrase and then play a similar phrase to the one you sang. You don't need to have perfect pitch to do this. If the pitches don't match exactly, that is fine. For now, the important thing is that you match the shape and rhythm of your sung phrase and that you train yourself to listen to your inner ear. As you grow as a musician, you will want to train your ear to be more and more accurate so that what you sing and what you play essentially sync up.

Practice singing and playing over a short-form ii-V-I progression. In a swing feel, sing a two-measure phrase over the progression while holding bass notes. Then, play a similar phrase for two measures. Practice in C, F, and E-flat.

Diagram illustrating the structure of Improvisation Exercise 10 over a ii-V-I progression (Dm7, G7, Cmaj7).

The exercise is divided into two main sections:

- sing a phrase:** This section covers the first two measures (Dm7 and G7).
- play a similar phrase:** This section covers the next two measures (Dm7 and G7).

The notation shows a bass line in 4/4 time, with a single note (F) held for the first two measures, and then a single note (C) held for the next two measures. The word "play" is written below the first measure.

Next, practice these exercises with a timer, spending about ten minutes each practice session. Activating your inner ear requires habit-forming practice. You must dedicate time, even if you don't immediately notice improvements.

ii-V-I Lick 8

ii-V-I Lick 8 is a short-form ii-V-I variation on ii-V-I Lick 7 designed to match this week's altered dominant theme. Using the same shape as Lick 7, this lick adds altered tones on the V chord for more color and has a slightly more colorful ending than Lick 7. As with Lick 7, be careful with your fingering, and avoid using the same finger twice in a row. You might have to keep your thumb tucked under your hand for the smoothest possible fingering.

Coordination Exercise 6

As a jazz pianist, it is important to be able to play a variety of melodies over a constant bassline. As you practiced the “Accompanying in a Duo Setting” exercise in the last unit, you might have noticed that it is difficult to play a bassline in your left hand while you improvise in your right hand.

The exercise below prompts you to play your major scale as a **hemiola**, a rhythmic pattern that doesn’t fit cleanly into the meter, over a bassline in two. The scale is presented as alternating eighth notes and quarter notes, forming a repeating one and a half beat pattern. As you practice in all keys, subdivide triplets and keep the metronome on beats two and four to make sure your swing feel has a solid groove.

Altered Dominants 1

Altered dominant chords are a crucial source of color in jazz. **Altered dominant chords** are created by raising or lowering the color tones of a dominant seventh chord by a half step. Raised or lowered tones are sometimes indicated in the chord symbol, but musicians are also permitted and expected to alter dominant chords themselves without any indication.

There are four primary alterations, some of which have enharmonic equivalents:

1. The **flat nine** is created by lowering the ninth of a chord by a half step. The flat nine is the most common alteration because it voice leads chromatically in a ii-V-I and includes notes native to the parallel minor key of the tonic. Listen to the sound of the flat nine by playing the roots of the chords, holding the pedal, and playing the voicings below.

2. The **sharp nine** is created by raising the ninth of a chord by a half step. Because the sharp nine is enharmonically equivalent to the minor third, it is often mistaken for that note. If a chord has both a major third and a minor third, it is probably a dominant seventh chord with a sharp nine. The sharp nine has a bluesy sound and is commonly used in funk pieces, like James Brown's "I Feel Good." Listen to the sound of the sharp nine in a ii-V-I progression by playing the roots of the chords, holding the pedal, and playing the voicings below.

Diagram illustrating a ii-V-I progression with sharp nine chords in 4/4 time. The progression consists of six measures, grouped into three pairs. Each pair represents a ii-V-I progression: Dm⁷ (Type A), G⁷ (Type B), and Cmaj⁷ (Type A). The G⁷ chords are marked with "sharp nine added" and a sharp sign on the F note. The voicings are shown for the roots of the chords, with the pedal held.

Now, play through the following measures of "I Feel Good" a few times so that you can hear a typical voicing for a dominant seventh chord with a sharp nine used in a funk piece. The three-note voicing only contains the third, seventh, and sharp nine.

Diagram illustrating a D⁷(#9) chord progression in 4/4 time. The progression consists of four measures. The first two measures show the D⁷(#9) chord in the right hand, with the third, seventh, and sharp nine notes. The last two measures show the D⁷(#9) chord in the left hand, with the third, seventh, and sharp nine notes. The voicings are shown for the roots of the chords, with the pedal held.

3. The **sharp five** and **flat thirteen** are enharmonically the same note. Like the flat nine, this note voice leads chromatically in a ii-V-I. A chord with a sharp five can also be referred to as an **augmented chord**. Augmented chords are indicated with a "+" sign. Listen to the sound of the sharp five/flat thirteen in a ii-V-I progression by playing the roots of the chords, holding the pedal, and playing the voicings. For the example, the altered tone is notated and named as a flat thirteen because it is part of a descending line (for more information, read the Frequently Asked Questions on the next page).

Diagram illustrating a ii-V-I progression with flat thirteen chords in 4/4 time. The progression consists of six measures, grouped into three pairs. Each pair represents a ii-V-I progression: Dm⁷ (Type A), G⁷ (Type B), and Cmaj⁷ (Type A). The G⁷ chords are marked with "flat thirteen added" and a flat sign on the F note. The voicings are shown for the roots of the chords, with the pedal held.

4. The **flat five** and **sharp eleven** are enharmonically the same note. A dominant seventh chord with a sharp eleven is a typical sound to use at the end of the piece and is heard in jazz pieces like Duke Ellington's "Take the A Train." Listen to the sound of the flat five/sharp eleven in a ii-V-I progression by playing the roots of the chords, holding the pedal, and playing the voicings. In the example below, the altered tone is notated and named as a sharp eleven because it is part of an ascending line (for more information, read the Frequently Asked Questions below).

The image shows a musical score for a ii-V-I progression: Dm7 - G7 - Cmaj7 - Dm7 - G7 - Cmaj7. The notation is presented in two systems, each with six measures. The first system shows the progression from Dm7 to G7 to Cmaj7, and the second system shows it from Dm7 to G7 to Cmaj7. Each measure contains a piano voicing. The first and third measures of each system are labeled 'Type A' and show standard voicings. The second and fourth measures are labeled 'Type B' and show an altered voicing where the fifth is replaced by a sharp eleven (F#). Above the staff, the chord names are written: Dm7, G7, Cmaj7, Dm7, G7, Cmaj7. Above the staff, the altered tone is labeled 'sharp eleven' and 'added' with a sharp sign. The notes are written on a grand staff (treble and bass clef). The notes for Dm7 are F, A, C, E-flat. The notes for G7 are B, D, F, A. The notes for Cmaj7 are E, G, B, C. The notes for the altered voicings (Type B) are F, A, C, F# (sharp eleven).

Choose three tunes that you have already played and decide on altered tones for all of the dominant chords. Practice playing Type A/B voicings, both one-handed and two-handed, incorporating the altered tones.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *How do I know whether to call the note a flat thirteen or a sharp five?*

What's the difference?

A: The answer to this question is complex and really "nerdy." It is not essential that you understand this at the moment, so if it is going to be stressful, skip this explanation! The first difference is simply whether the note ascends or descends. In any kind of music, sharps tend to ascend, flats tend to descend. Second, chords with an altered upper extension still have a natural five. For example, a chord with a sharp eleven still has a natural five, whereas a chord with a flat five does not have a natural five. Third, context can determine whether or not a certain chord is appropriate. If a dominant chord is heading towards C minor, notating the note as a flat thirteen (E-flat) rather than a sharp five (D-sharp) makes much more sense because E-flat is the third in C minor.

Q: *The voicings we learned don't have elevenths or thirteenths.*

What do I do with those notes?

A: In the voicings, treat them like a sharp five or a flat five. In other words, replace the fifth with the sharp eleven or flat thirteen.

Q: *Wait, so I really can just alter any dominant chord I want? Are there any limitations?*

A: Essentially, yes. Please don't wait for an invitation to alter dominant chords.

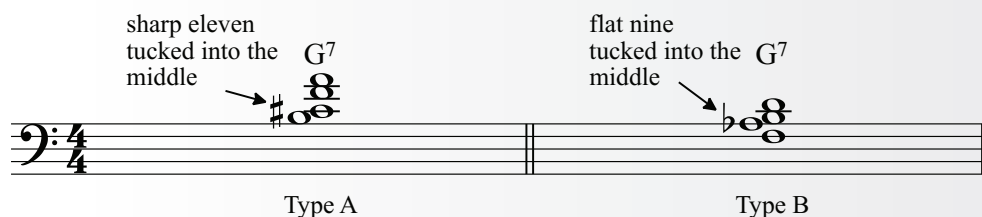
There are, however, some limitations. Remember to only alter dominant chords! Don't try to alter major or minor seventh chords. Be conscious of the melody. Avoid adding an altered tone that falls a half-step away from a prominent melody note (one that is held or comes on a strong beat). Tempo is also a factor here. At a fast tempo, most rubs will go unnoticed. At a slower tempo, it is important to be very conscious of accommodating the notes in the melody as well as adjusting your alterations to chords played by soloists. Listening for these tones and adjusting chords correctly takes lots of practice and skill.

In measure two below, don't use a flat five/sharp eleven or sharp five/flat thirteen on the G dominant seventh chord because it will clash with the D in the melody. In measure four, don't alter the ninth of the F dominant seventh because it will clash with the G in the melody.



Q: *In my one-handed Type A/B voicings, I'm playing only the fifth or the ninth. How do I add an alteration?*

A: Good question! For now, work with what you have. If you are playing the fifth, try to find a voicing with an altered fifth. If that won't work, you can also tuck an alteration into the middle of the voicing. Later, you will learn four-note one-handed voicings so that you can include as many alterations as you want.



Q: *I have seen some pieces with alterations on major seventh and minor seventh chords. Are these incorrect?*

A: No, they are not incorrect. There are ways to shade major seventh and minor seventh chords, but they can't be altered as freely as dominant seventh chords. For now, follow the directions provided by the chord symbols for major or minor seventh chords, but feel free to make your own alterations for dominant seventh chords.

Written Practice

Write two-handed four-note Type A/B voicings for the indicated altered dominant chords.

B \flat 7(#9) E \flat 7(#11) G7(b13) D7(b5) A \flat 7(#5) D \flat 7(b9)

7 A7(b13) B7(b9) C7(#9) A \flat 7(b13) E7(b5) B \flat 7(#5) E \flat 7(b9)

14 B7(b13) C#7(b9) D7(#9) E7(b13) F#7(b9) G7(#9) E \flat 7(b13)

ii-V-I Practice

Practice two-handed Type A/B voicings through all keys, first with flat nines, then with sharp fives/flat thirteens. The first few keys are given to you below.

A

Type A ii-V-I's with flat nines added

Dm 7 G 7 Cmaj 7 Cm 7 F 7 B \flat maj 7 B \flat m 7 E \flat 7 A \flat maj 7

Type A Type B Type A Type A Type B Type A Type A Type B Type A

B

Type B ii-V-I's with flat nines added

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷ Cm⁷ F⁷ B^bmaj⁷ B^bm⁷ E^b⁷ A^bmaj⁷

Type B Type A Type B Type B Type A Type B Type B Type A Type B

C

Type A ii-V-I's with sharp fives/flat thirteens added

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷ Cm⁷ F⁷ B^bmaj⁷ B^bm⁷ E^b⁷ A^bmaj⁷

Type A Type B Type A Type A Type B Type A Type A Type B Type A

D

Type B ii-V-I's with sharp fives/flat thirteens added

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷ Cm⁷ F⁷ B^bmaj⁷ B^bm⁷ E^b⁷ A^bmaj⁷

Type B Type A Type B Type B Type A Type B Type B Type A Type B

Bossa Nova and Samba

Besides playing in swing styles, jazz musicians commonly perform music in Brazilian styles, most often bossa nova and samba. Stylistically, these two genres are very similar, but **bossa nova** is the slow or medium tempo version and **samba** is the up-tempo version.

Brazilian styles are different than swing styles in many ways. First, Brazilian music should be played with even eighth notes rather than swung eighths. However, most musicians still put the emphasis on the offbeats rather than the downbeats when playing Brazilian styles. Even with even eighth notes, bossa nova and samba still feel a little bit swung.

Second, comping rhythms and styles are different. Three bossa nova comping patterns are listed below.

1. Simple bossa nova rhythm

This is your easiest option when playing bossa nova.



2. All off-beats

It is common to lightly play all the offbeats in bossa nova and samba. Give the music forward momentum by anticipating each chord. Start your comping rhythm on the “and of four,” not the “and of one.” Some pianists like to place light accents on the comps anticipating the strong beats, the “and of four” and “and of two.” When emphasizing these two comps, use a down-up motion, dropping your weight on the “and of four” and “and of two” and playing the “and of one” and “and of three” using a lift-off motion.

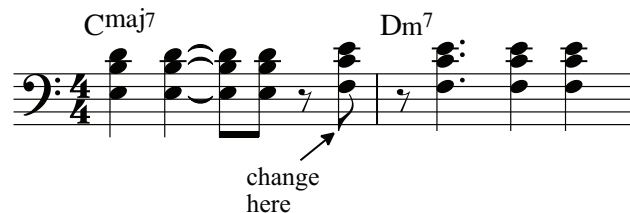
A musical staff in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. It shows a comping pattern for four measures. Each measure contains four eighth notes on the second line of the staff, all of which are offbeats (beats 2, 4, 6, and 8). Above the staff, the chords for each measure are labeled: Cmaj7, Dm7, G7, and Cmaj7. Below the staff, three arrows point to the eighth notes on beats 4, 6, and 8, each with the text "anticipate next chord".

3. The partido alto pattern

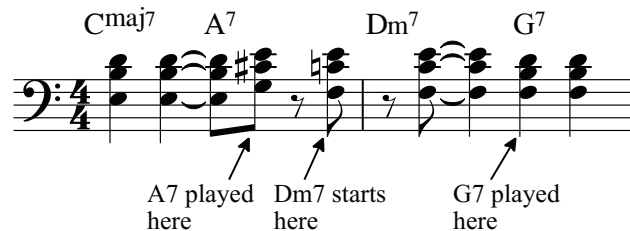
The **partido alto** (“middle part”) pattern is a two-measure comping pattern that traces its origin back to Brazilian percussion. Although you should start by practicing it literally, it is common to hear guitarists and pianists comp using variations of this pattern.



Because the partido alto pattern is a two-measure pattern, you will commonly have to switch chords in the middle of the pattern (don't try to change the length of the harmonic rhythm to match the pattern). The example below shows that you should change chords beginning on the “and of four” on the first measure of the pattern when the harmonic rhythm changes once per measure.



Study the example below, which shows how to play the partido alto pattern when the harmonic rhythm changes twice per measure. Notice that the second chord (A dominant seventh) is comped only once, whereas the other chords are each comped twice.



Because Brazilian music is generally guitar-based rather than piano-based music, comping needs to be light and airy rather than percussive. Play with an upwards motion from your wrist and arm rather than striking downwards into the keys. Whereas swing comping is typically staccato to imitate the percussiveness of a snare drum, bossa nova comping can be held longer to simulate the vibrating strings of the guitar. However, the pedal should still be avoided. Unlike in swing music, bossa nova and samba comping generally sticks with a single comping rhythm for a whole section. Since Brazilian music is based on repetitive grooves, repetition of a rhythmic pattern is expected.

Basslines for Brazilian music are very similar to swing basslines in two with slight stylistic differences. The first difference has to do with emphasis. Whereas in swing music, bassists generally play the two notes in a measure evenly, in Brazilian music, it is common to place more emphasis on beat three than on beat one, giving the music the feeling of a **backbeat**. Secondly, bossa nova bassists commonly add **skip beats**, eighth notes anticipating the strong beats, to their half notes. The example below shows a bassline and partido alto comping in a bossa nova style.

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time, featuring a bossa nova style. It consists of two systems of music. The first system contains four measures, with the first two measures labeled with the chord **Fmaj7** and the last two measures labeled with **G7**. The second system contains four measures, with the first two labeled **Gm7** and the last two labeled **Gb7**. The right hand (treble clef) plays a comping pattern using Type A/B voicings, often with a skip beat (eighth note) on beat 3. The left hand (bass clef) plays a bassline with a strong emphasis on beat 3, often using a half note on beat 1 and a half note on beat 3, with an eighth note skip beat on beat 2.

Learn “The Girl from Ipanema” and “Desafinado,” practicing all three comping patterns with play-alongs, using two-handed Type A/B voicings. Then, practice playing the comping patterns in the right hand while playing a Brazilian bassline in the left hand.

FAQ

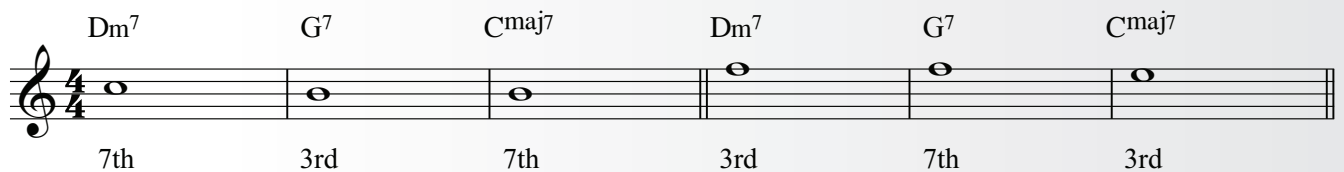
Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What if there's a guitarist in the ensemble as I'm playing bossa nova music?

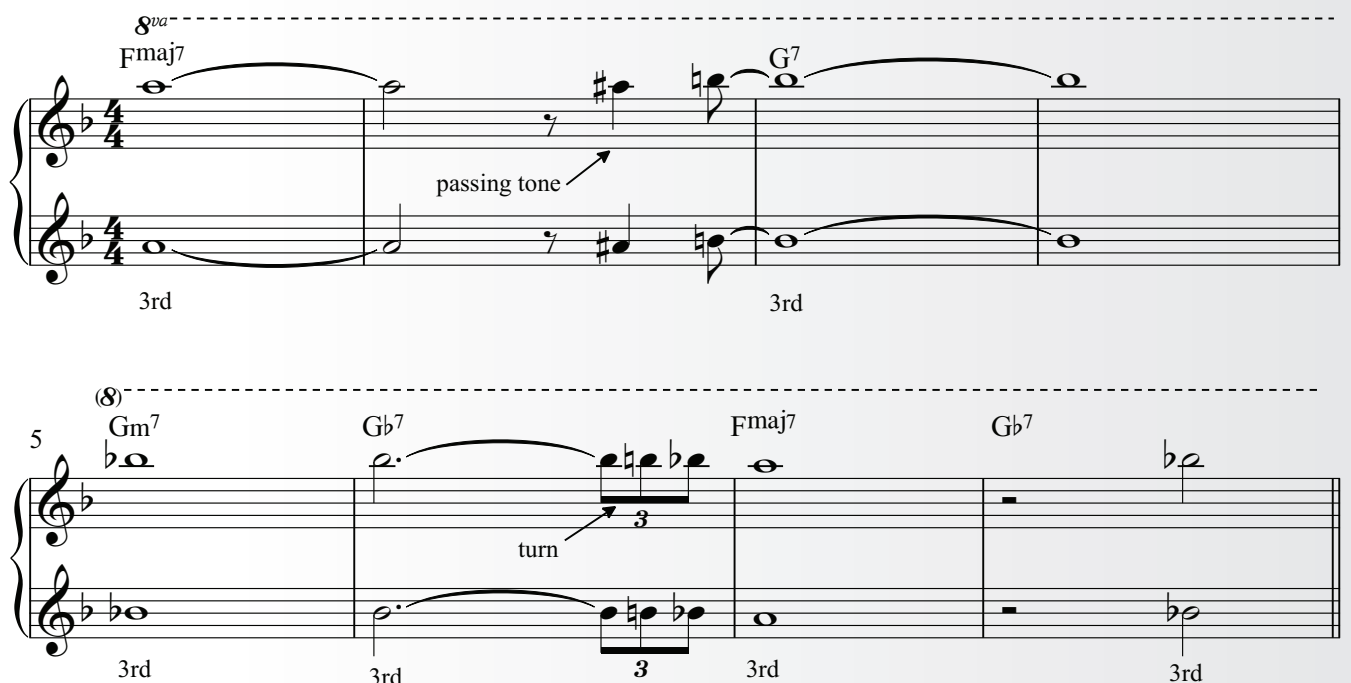
A: Great question! In most kinds of music, guitarists and pianists avoid comping at the same time because multiple instruments comping simultaneously will make the music sound cluttered. Pianists and guitarists usually take turns comping.

In Brazilian music, since the guitar is the key instrument, pianists usually allow guitarists to be the primary comping instrument. When guitarists comp, pianists can play **fills**, short improvisations that fit in between phrases of the melody.

Pianists can also lightly play **guidetone lines**, melodies created by stepwise connections of the chords' thirds and sevenths. Guidetone lines are usually played in octaves in the upper register of the piano. The diagram below shows the two possible guidetone lines for a ii-V-I progression in C major, one starting on the third and one starting on the seventh.

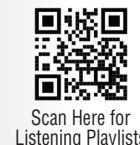


Here is a guidetone line for a longer progression. In this example, all thirds are used because they create the smoothest possible stepwise melody. The pianist should play the guidetones as indicated, using both hands, changing the rhythm, and adding passing tones, turns, or grace notes as they see fit.



GUIDED LISTENING 10 –

“Corcovado” by Stan Getz & João Gilberto



“Corcovado” is the fifth track from Stan Getz and João Gilberto’s 1964 album *Getz/Gilberto*.

Getz/Gilberto is a modern classic, a critically-acclaimed and best-selling album that almost single-handedly initiated a bossa nova craze in the United States. Besides tenor saxophonist **Stan Getz (1927-1991)**, already well-known for a breathy tone and cool sense of swing, and guitarist/vocalist **João Gilberto (1931-2019)**, a brilliant interpreter of bossa nova who sings in a whisper and stretches phrases wildly across measure lines, this album brought composer-pianist **Antônio Carlos Jobim (1927-1994)** into the American spotlight. Jobim is widely recognized as the most influential composer of bossa nova music and many of his tunes have become jazz standards, including “The Girl from Ipanema,” “Wave,” “Desafinado,” “How Insensitive,” “If You Never Come to Me,” “Dindi,” and many more. The tune “Corcovado” features the haunting tones of Gilberto’s wife, **Astrud Gilberto (1940-)**, who had never sung professionally before this recording!

PERSONNEL

Stan Getz, tenor saxophone

João Gilberto, guitar/vocals

Astrud Gilberto, vocals

Antônio Carlos Jobim, piano/composer

Sebastião Neto, bass

Milton Banana, drums

Form

0:00- 0:30 First Half of Head, English

0:30-1:05 Saxophone Solo (Half Chorus)

1:05-1:32 Piano Solo (Half Chorus)

1:32-2:08 Second Half of Head, Portuguese

2:08-end Saxophone Outro

On this recording, one never actually hears the entire melody of “Corcovado” performed straight through. Each chorus is split in two. Astrud Gilberto sings the first half of the melody in English at the very beginning, then Stan Getz finishes the chorus with a variation. For the second chorus, Jobim takes a solo over the first half before João Gilberto sings the second half of the head in Portuguese.

Notice how incredibly light everything is. The piano melodies, the guitar comping, the saxophone fills, and both vocal melodies are all performed with an airy tone and no harsh sounds anywhere. Even the drummer seems to be barely touching the drum set. The theme of “Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars” is very typical of bossa nova. Bossa nova songs are stereotypically intimate, relaxing, filled with nature and beaches, and made to be performed at a whisper rather than a shout. Notice that Jobim doesn’t really comp on the piano. Even during his solo, he leaves the comping to Gilberto while he plays single-note melodies.

Notice Gilberto’s comping pattern on the guitar. He plays a variation of the basic bossa nova pattern. Pay attention to the eighth notes. Listen to the repeated eighths the drummer plays on the hi-hat. Even though they are not swung, the eighth notes are played with an accent pattern that gives them a sense of syncopation. Now, listen to Getz and Jobim’s phrasing in their solos. Again, the eighth notes are syncopated but not swung. Their accents create a sense of undulating rhythm. Study Jobim’s eighth-note line at 1:27. You can hear that he is placing accents on the syncopated notes to give the phrase a rhythmic lift and solidify the groove.

UNIT 10 ASSIGNMENTS

1. Improvisation Exercise 10 – Play What You Sing

- a. Over a drone
- b. Over a short-form ii-V-I

2. ii-V-I Lick 8

3. Coordination Exercise 6

4. Altered Dominants Practice

- a. Complete written practice
- b. Choose three tunes that you have already played and decide on altered tones for all of the dominant chords. Practice playing Type A/B voicings, both one-handed and two-handed, incorporating the altered tones
- c. ii-V-I exercise

5. Learn “The Girl from Ipanema” and “Desafinado,” practicing each of the three styles of bossa nova comping

- a. Practice with two-handed voicings
- b. Practice comping in the right hand while playing a bassline in the left hand

6. Guided Listening 10: “Corcovado” by Stan Getz and João Gilberto

- a. Listen to “Corcovado” at least twenty times
- b. Pay special attention to the dynamics and eighth-note feel in the bossa nova style
- c. Listen to João Gilberto’s guitar comping and Antônio Carlos Jobim’s piano accompaniments

Unit 11

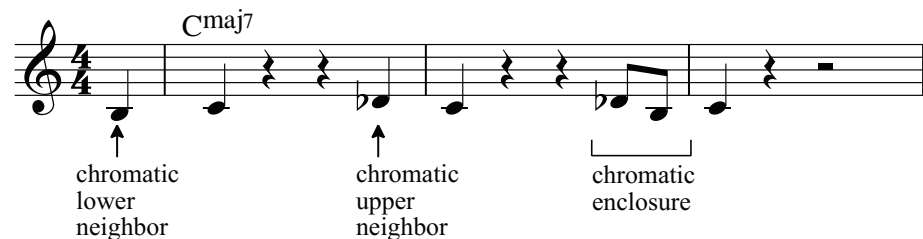
More Altered Dominants



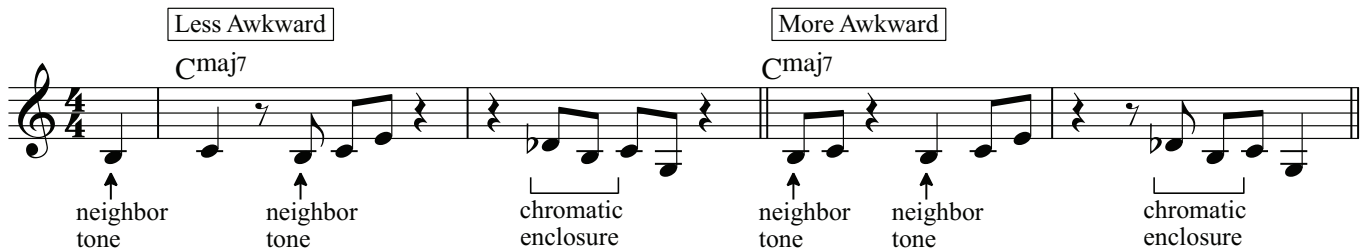
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Unit 16 Videos

Improvisation Exercise 11 – Neighbor Tones & Chromatic Enclosure

Neighbor tones are notes a step away from a chord tone that embellish that chord tone. Jazz musicians tend to use primarily **chromatic neighbor tones**, neighbor tones just a half step away from the chord tone. You have also already learned about the **chromatic enclosure**, where a musician leads into a target note by playing neighbor tones a half step above and then a half step below the target.



In general, neighbor tones are played on relatively weaker beats compared to the chord tones they target. While it is possible to have accented neighbor tones that fall on the strong beat, it is relatively uncommon.



Practice improvising over a drone in the keys of C, E-flat, and G major, using chromatic neighbor tones and the chromatic enclosure. Start by practicing using neighbor tones targeting the root, then practice neighbor tones targeting the third and fifth of the chord.

The example below shows a brief improvisation using chromatic neighbors and enclosures.

Improvisation Over an E^b Drone

5

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What exactly is a chord tone?

A: That is actually a really difficult question to answer. In jazz, you could make the argument that every note of the scale is a chord tone because chords can have upper extensions all the way up to the thirteenth. For your practice, think of the notes up to the ninth, the root, third, fifth, seventh, and ninth as chord tones.

Q: Do chromatic enclosures ever start from below and then go above a note?

A: Yes, but rarely. Stick to practicing the version that starts with the upper note first.

Q: In the section on turns, you said that upper neighbors are generally diatonic whereas lower neighbors are generally chromatic! Are you now saying that's not true?

A: Great memory! It is completely true, but practice using chromatic upper neighbors for now. There are two reasons:

1. It is probably too complex to think about chromatic versus diatonic neighbors when you are in the middle of an improvisation.
2. Practicing diatonic upper neighbors doesn't add anything new to your improvisations because you already use notes of the scale when improvising.

ii-V-I Lick 9

ii-V-I Lick 9 provides more practice on altered dominant chords. It uses the flat nine and the sharp eleven in an arpeggio over the V chord.



Besides the altered tones, this lick also uses the chromatic enclosure to lead into the downbeat of the second measure. Ironically, because the chromatic enclosure is surrounding an altered tone, both notes are actually diatonic in the key of C major.

Altered Dominants 2

The altered tones for dominant chords are frequently combined to create more complex and richly colorful altered dominants. All four of the altered tones can be combined with one another, including both flat and sharp nine and flat and sharp five.

The example below shows five possibilities for dominant seventh chords with multiple altered tones. Notice that the voicings can consist of as many as six notes. Spend some time experimenting with different combinations of altered tones for the V chord of a ii-V-I progression and find sounds that appeal to you.

| G ⁷ | G ⁷ | G ⁷ | G ⁷ | G ⁷ |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| sharp nine, flat five | flat nine, flat thirteen | flat nine, sharp nine | flat thirteen, sharp eleven | sharp eleven, flat nine, sharp nine, flat thirteen |
| Type B | Type B | Type A | Type A | Type B |

With all of the possible options, it is no wonder that jazz musicians have come up with various ways to codify and simplify dominant chords with multiple altered tones.

The **tritone substitution** is an important concept in jazz harmony that provides a shortcut to using multiple altered tones. The rule of the tritone substitution states that musicians can treat any two dominant chords with roots a tritone apart as interchangeable. In other words, if a G dominant seventh is written, you can play a D-flat dominant seventh instead. If an F dominant seventh is written, you can play a B dominant seventh instead. Notice that instead of alternating between Type A and Type B voicings, when using the tritone substitution you should stick with a single type throughout the entire ii-V-I. The tritone substitution only applies to dominant chords.

The first diagram illustrates the tritone substitution in a ii-V-I progression. It shows two versions: 'Original ii-V-I' and 'With Tritone Substitution'. The original progression consists of Dm⁷, G⁷, and Cmaj⁷. The tritone substitution version consists of Dm⁷, Db⁷, and Cmaj⁷. The chords are labeled as Type A or Type B based on their bass notes. In the original progression, Dm⁷ is Type A, G⁷ is Type B, and Cmaj⁷ is Type A. In the tritone substitution version, Dm⁷ is Type A, Db⁷ is Type A, and Cmaj⁷ is Type A.

The second diagram illustrates the tritone substitution in a ii-V-I progression. It shows two versions: 'Original ii-V-I' and 'With Tritone Substitution'. The original progression consists of Cm⁷, F⁷, and Bbmaj⁷. The tritone substitution version consists of Cm⁷, B⁷, and Bbmaj⁷. The chords are labeled as Type B or Type A based on their bass notes. In the original progression, Cm⁷ is Type B, F⁷ is Type A, and Bbmaj⁷ is Type B. In the tritone substitution version, Cm⁷ is Type B, B⁷ is Type B, and Bbmaj⁷ is Type B.

There are three reasons why the tritone substitution works:

1. The tritone substitution creates a chromatically descending bassline. Harmonies with basslines that move by step usually work because they create natural resolutions. Stepwise basslines are very effective and common to most musical styles.
2. The chords have the same essential tones, just flipped. In the example in C major above, notice that both the G dominant seventh and D-flat dominant seventh chords have F and B (enharmonically C-flat) as the third and seventh. For the G dominant seventh, F is the seventh and B is the third; for the D-flat dominant seventh, F is the third and C-flat is the seventh.
3. The color tones become altered tones and vice versa. The new fifth and ninth of the D-flat dominant seventh are the flat nine and flat thirteen of the original chord. Therefore, even if the bassist still plays a G, the chord will simply sound like a G dominant seventh with alterations.

Now, look back at ii-V-I Lick 9 from this unit. Notice the D-flat dominant chord outlined melodically against the G dominant seventh. Outlining that chord could be viewed from two perspectives. On one hand, it outlines a G dominant seventh chord with a flat nine and flat five. On the other hand, it outlines the root, third, fifth, and seventh of the tritone substitution of G dominant seventh.

Musicians also use the shorthand “alt” in a chord symbol to denote an **altered chord**, a chord with multiple alterations. The chord symbol for an “alt” chord might look like “C⁷alt.” The altered chord technically goes with a scale called the **altered scale** (also known as the **diminished-whole tone** or the **super locrian**) which is the seventh mode of the melodic minor scale. As shown in the example below, you should use the melodic minor scale of the key a half-step above the root of the alt chord. The G altered scale, written below, is derived from the A-flat melodic minor scale.



The altered scale is a very unusual scale, but a very useful one. The scale is unusual because the “third” of the chord is in the fourth position in the scale! But it is useful because the notes of the scale hit all four altered tones plus the third and seventh of the dominant chord.

When playing an “alt” chord, pianists should choose only notes from this scale, avoiding the natural fifth and natural ninth. The pianist can choose to play all of the altered tones or only highlight specific altered tones and omit others. Below are multiple possible voicings for an “alt” chord. Many are similar to the voicings presented earlier.

| G ⁷ alt. | G ⁷ alt. | G ⁷ alt. | G ⁷ alt. | G ⁷ alt. |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | | | | |
| Type B | Type B | Type A | Type A | Type B |

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *Can any member of the band choose to use the tritone substitution?*

Won't that create chaos?

A: Yes, anyone can choose to use the tritone substitution! No, it won't create chaos. Look at the diagram on the next page. You will find that when one member of the band uses the tritone substitution but others don't, it flips “normal” color tones to altered tones and vice versa. That means the bassist, the comping instrument, and the soloist can all freely choose whether to play the original chord or the tritone substitution.

A **B**

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

(no altered tones) (flat nine and flat thirteen)

tritone sub tritone sub

C **D**

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

(plays D^b7 with no altered tones) (plays D^b7 with flat nine and flat thirteen)

tritone sub tritone sub

- In Example A, the bassist makes the tritone substitution but the pianist doesn't. The pianist plays a dominant seventh chord with no alterations. This chord will sound like a D-flat dominant seventh with a flat nine and flat thirteen.
- In Example B, the bassist makes the tritone substitution but the pianist doesn't. The pianist plays a dominant seventh chord with alterations. The chord will sound like an unaltered D-flat dominant seventh.
- In Example C, the pianist makes the tritone substitution but the bassist doesn't. The pianist plays the dominant seventh chord with no alterations. The chord sounds like a G dominant seventh with a flat nine and flat thirteen.
- In Example D, the pianist makes the tritone substitution but the bassist doesn't. The pianist plays the dominant seventh chord with alterations. The chord sounds like an unaltered G dominant seventh.

As you can see, no matter the combination, using the tritone substitution will maintain the appropriate sound of a dominant chord!

Q: *The “alt” chord doesn’t make any sense. How can I choose which notes are in the chord?*

A: Actually, in jazz, you are always choosing which notes are in a chord. Sometimes we choose to play the ninth, the eleventh or thirteenth, whereas other times we leave these tones out. The “alt” chord is no different, it just uses a much less familiar scale.

ii-V-I Exercises

Practice your ii-V-I progressions with tritone substitutions replacing the original chords. Practice first with two-handed Type A/B voicings. These voicings will be identical to a G dominant seventh with a flat nine and flat thirteen. You will observe that the smoothest voice leading for this progression is created by using three consecutive voicings of the same type instead of alternating between Type A and Type B voicings.

This musical exercise shows two sets of three chords each, in 4/4 time. The first set, labeled 'Type A', consists of Dm⁷, Db⁷, and Cmaj⁷. The second set, labeled 'Type B', consists of Dm⁷, Db⁷, and Cmaj⁷. Each chord is represented by a two-measure block. The notes are written in a grand staff (treble and bass clef). In the Type A voicings, the bass line moves from F (Dm⁷) to Eb (Db⁷) to C (Cmaj⁷), and the treble line moves from Bb (Dm⁷) to Bb (Db⁷) to C (Cmaj⁷). In the Type B voicings, the bass line moves from F (Dm⁷) to Eb (Db⁷) to C (Cmaj⁷), and the treble line moves from Bb (Dm⁷) to Bb (Db⁷) to C (Cmaj⁷).

Second, practice playing a bassline in two in the left hand and comping in a pattern of your choice with one-handed Type A/B voicings in the right hand.

This musical exercise shows a progression of three chords: Dm⁷, Db⁷, and Cmaj⁷. Each chord is represented by a two-measure block. The bass line is written in the left hand, moving from F (Dm⁷) to Eb (Db⁷) to C (Cmaj⁷). The right hand is shown with one-handed voicings, where the left hand plays the bass line and the right hand plays the chord voicing. The voicings are labeled 'Type A'.

This musical exercise shows a progression of three chords: Dm⁷, Db⁷, and Cmaj⁷. Each chord is represented by a two-measure block. The bass line is written in the left hand, moving from F (Dm⁷) to Eb (Db⁷) to C (Cmaj⁷). The right hand is shown with one-handed voicings, where the left hand plays the bass line and the right hand plays the chord voicing. The voicings are labeled 'Type B'.

When using multiple altered tones, it usually sounds best to resolve each note in a stepwise manner, creating a five-note tonic chord. Practice these formulas for resolving altered dominant chords with flat thirteens, flat nines, and sharp nines. Notice that the I chord uses the thirteenth, the scale degree equivalent to the sixth.

Chord progression: Dm7, G7alt., Cmaj7, Dm7, G7alt., Cmaj7

Measure 1: Dm7 (Type A)

Measure 2: G7alt. (Type B)

Measure 3: Cmaj7 (Type A)

Measure 4: Dm7 (Type B)

Measure 5: G7alt. (Type A)

Measure 6: Cmaj7 (Type B)

Practice both of these exercises in all keys going down by half steps. Start with a ii-V-I progression in C major, then play a ii-V-I progression in B major, B-flat major, etc.

Comping Variations 2

Thus far, you have been comping using the Charleston and Reverse Charleston patterns, adding lead-ins, push-offs, and long-short variations. In the section below, you will learn even more ways to vary your comping.

1. Play the Charleston or Reverse Charleston pattern in the second half of the measure, starting on beat three or the “and of three.”

For the Charleston, the two comps will now fall on beat three and the “and of four.” Remember that comps on the “and of four” anticipate the chord in the next measure. For the Reverse Charleston, the two comps fall on the “and of three” and beat one of the following measure.

Charleston Starting on Beat 3

Chord progression: Dm7, G7, Cmaj7, G7

Pattern: Charleston Starting on Beat 3

Annotations: anticipation (on beat 3 and the and of four)

Charleston Starting on the “and of 3”

Chord progression: Dm7, G7, Cmaj7, G7

Pattern: Charleston Starting on the “and of 3”

Annotations: Reverse Charleston

2. Leave out a comp.

Using familiar comping patterns, leave out a comp and play only one comp per measure. Typically, pianists will choose to play the offbeat comp rather than the downbeat comp because it creates more rhythmic energy.

The image shows two musical examples in 4/4 time, each consisting of a piano accompaniment with chords Dm7, G7, and Cmaj7.

Charleston: The piano part consists of eighth notes on the offbeats (2 and 4) and quarter notes on the downbeats (1 and 3). The chords are Dm7 (measures 1 and 3), G7 (measures 2 and 4), and Cmaj7 (measures 1 and 3). Arrows point to the downbeats of measures 2 and 4, labeled "comp omitted".

Reverse Charleston: The piano part consists of quarter notes on the downbeats (1 and 3) and eighth notes on the offbeats (2 and 4). The chords are Dm7 (measures 1 and 3), G7 (measures 2 and 4), and Cmaj7 (measures 1 and 3). Arrows point to the downbeats of measures 1 and 3, labeled "comp omitted".

3. Use a sidestep to create harmonic motion.

Sidestepping is the technique of displacing a chord by a half step and then resolving it to the correct chord. Sidesteps are usually placed on a relatively weaker beat and resolved to a relatively stronger beat (see Frequently Asked Questions on page 175). Chords can be moved either a half-step down or a half-step up to create a sidestep from below or a sidestep from above, respectively.

A sidestep can also be used to lead into a chord that hasn't yet been stated. In measure two on the next page, the chord on the "and of three" is a sidestep from above leading into the C major seventh chord in the next measure. In measure three, the chord on beat four is a sidestep from below leading into the C major seventh. Notice also the **double sidestep** in measure six, in which the C major seventh chord on the beat is displaced by half-step twice before arriving at the correct chord on the downbeat. The example on the next page shows typical places to use a sidestep.

Swing

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

Partido Alto

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

4. Use the four-four comping patterns to comp in three-four.

Because the vast majority of jazz music is played in four-four time, all the comping patterns you have learned thus far have been in four-four meter. However, it is important to know how to comp for swing pieces in three-four, which are sometimes called **jazz waltzes**. When playing in three-four, start with the equivalent of the Charleston and Reverse Charleston in three-four. The patterns start the same but omit a beat at the end, as shown below.

Three-Four Charleston

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

Three-Four Reverse Charleston

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *How do I know whether a beat is weaker or stronger than another?*

A: This is a complicated question. The strong beats in a four-four measure are generally beats one and three. However, in jazz, we frequently anticipate these strong beats on the “and of four” and “and of two,” respectively, to create substitute strong beats. You can tell that a note is acting as an anticipation if there is no note on the strong beat following a note on the “and of two” or “and of four.” The two strong beats and their anticipations are the strongest in the measure. After that, the beats (1, 2, 3, 4) are stronger than the offbeats (“ands”).

Q: *Won't the sidestep create dissonance? I mean, the chords used as sidesteps have all the wrong notes!*

A: Yes, but dissonance is a part of music. A very important part! Like a chromatic neighbor tone, sidesteps create momentary tensions that are quickly resolved. They work best at medium or fast tempos. While it is great to practice slowly, slow practice can convince you that dissonances are more problematic than they actually are at the regular tempo. Trust the process and work on these chords. They add needed color.

Q: *The Reverse Charleston starting on the “and of three” ends on beat one which is where the Charleston starts. Can I combine these two patterns to create a two-measure comping pattern?*

A: Yes, absolutely, please do! I love it! The example below shows the combined comping patterns.

The example shows a four-measure comping pattern in 4/4 time. The chords are Dm⁷, G⁷, Cmaj⁷, and G⁷. The patterns are as follows:

- Measure 1: Dm⁷. Rev. Charleston in second half of measure (beats 3 and 4).
- Measure 2: G⁷. original Charleston (beats 1 and 2).
- Measure 3: Cmaj⁷. Rev. Charleston in second half of measure (beats 3 and 4).
- Measure 4: G⁷. original Charleston (beats 1 and 2).

While we are combining comping patterns, the original Reverse Charleston ends on beat three which is where the Charleston pattern starts if you move it to the second half of the measure. These are ripe for combining! The example below shows the result.

The example shows a four-measure comping pattern in 4/4 time. The chords are Dm⁷, G⁷, Cmaj⁷, and G⁷. The patterns are as follows:

- Measure 1: Dm⁷. Rev. Charleston (beats 1 and 2).
- Measure 2: G⁷. Charleston in second half of measure (beats 3 and 4).
- Measure 3: Cmaj⁷. Rev. Charleston (beats 1 and 2).
- Measure 4: G⁷. Charleston in second half of measure (beats 3 and 4).

GUIDED LISTENING 11 –

“Remember” by Hank Mobley



“Remember,” a song written by Irving Berlin, is the first track from Hank Mobley’s 1960 album, *Soul Station*.

PERSONNEL

Hank Mobley, tenor saxophone

Wynton Kelly, piano

Paul Chambers, bass

Art Blakey, drums

Form

- 0:00-0:42 Head In (AABA form)
- 0:42-3:05 Saxophone Solo (3 Choruses)
- 3:05-4:37 Piano Solo (2 Choruses)
- 4:37-4:59 Bass Solo (Half Chorus)
- 4:59-5:19 Head Out
(Half Chorus – Bridge and Last A)
- 5:19-end Ending

Hank Mobley (1930-1986) was a hardbop tenor saxophone player known for his robust tone and ability to create memorable melodies. Mobley got his start with the Jazz Messengers, an incredibly historically important group initially founded by pianist Horace Silver but led for many decades by drummer **Art Blakey (1919-1990)**, the drummer on this album. Blakey turned the group into one of the primary training grounds for young jazz musicians. Alumni of the Jazz Messengers include Lee Morgan, Wynton Marsalis, Benny Golson, Keith Jarrett, Benny Green, Terence Blanchard, Wayne Shorter, and many other influential musicians. Joining Mobley and Blakey are two musicians you have already met from Guided Listening 1, pianist Wynton Kelly and bassist Paul Chambers, who are both known for playing in Miles Davis’ ensemble.

The piece “Remember” is interesting because it shows how jazz musicians can adapt a popular song into a swing performance. The original piece, written by composer Irving Berlin, is a slow, tragic waltz in B-flat major, which you can hear if you listen to the first half of Ella Fitzgerald’s version from *The Irving Berlin Songbook*. Mobley and his group take that slow waltz and transform it into a medium swing piece in four-four time.

Mobley’s solo is one of the best-known solos in the jazz repertoire. He doesn’t rely on lightning-fast technique or complex substitutions to create his solo, instead he improvises melodies that are singable and memorable. He also develops motives, particularly forming sequences that descend chromatically with the chord changes. You can hear these chromatic sequences from the very beginning of his solo (0:45-0:50), briefly in the second A section (0:58-0:59), at 1:20-1:22, with two phrases at the beginning of his second chorus (1:31-1:33 and 1:35-1:37), at 1:44-1:49, and again as the third chorus begins, 2:18-2:23.

Behind Mobley, the rhythm section swings with seemingly effortless intensity. Listen to Kelly’s comping. As Mobley plays the repetitive melody, Kelly plays single comps in response, generally on the “and of two.” He often uses multiple push-offs, pairing three or more eighth-note comps together (listen to 0:09, 0:19, 0:25, 0:30, and many more spots). Listen to the way that Kelly’s comping fits like a puzzle into Mobley’s presentation of the theme and complements his solo. Besides conveying intensity in the way that he plays time, Blakey is known among drummers for what is called a **press roll**, a drum roll formed by a series of double strokes that ratchets up intensity leading into a section. You can hear Blakey’s press rolls leading into the bridge during the head (0:21) and during Mobley’s final chorus of solo (2:41).

UNIT 11 ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Improvisation Exercise 11 – practice using neighbor tones and the chromatic enclosure**
2. **ii-V-I-Lick 9 – practice in all twelve keys and apply to tunes**
3. **ii-V-I Exercises for Altered Dominants 2**
 - a. Two-handed voicings with tritone substitution
 - b. One-handed voicing in the right hand with bass in two and in left hand, with tritone substitution
 - c. Practice resolving chords with multiple altered tones
4. **Choose two pieces from *The Real Book* list and practice:**
 - a. Playing the Charleston/Reverse Charleston in the second half of the measure
 - b. Leaving out the onbeat comp of your comping pattern
 - c. Sidestepping
5. **Learn “Alice in Wonderland” and “A Child is Born” from *The Real Book* and practice comping in three-four using the two patterns presented**
6. **Guided Listening 11: “Remember” by Hank Mobley**
 - a. Listen to “Remember” at least twenty times
 - b. Pay attention to how Hank Mobley plays melodic solos including sequences
 - c. Listen for how Wynton Kelly uses multiple push-offs when comping

Unit 12

Improvising with Altered Dominants



Scan Here for
Unit 12 Videos

Improvisation Exercise 12 – Using the Altered Scale

In the last chapter, you were introduced to the altered scale, a collection of notes that includes all four altered tones as well as a chord's major third and dominant seventh. Remember that you can find the altered scale by playing the notes of the melodic minor scale of the key a half-step above a chord's root.



In this unit, you will be exploring the altered scale for the dominant chord in the keys of C, F, B-flat, E-flat, and G using a two-part drone. To begin, play just the root and fifth of the dominant chord in the left hand and practice improvising out of time using the altered scale. Then, resolve to the tonic chord and improvise out of time using the major scale. Because there are so many tense notes in the altered scale, it is crucial to listen for how each note wants to resolve and to resolve it appropriately.

A sample improvisation is given below.

G⁷alt. Cmaj7

G⁷alt. Cmaj7

ii-V-I Lick 10

ii-V-I Lick 10 uses the G altered scale over the V chord of the ii-V-I. Listen for the color created by using all four altered tones. Studying Lick 10, you will also find two chromatic enclosures, a ghost note, and a turn. Hopefully, this lick helps you to understand how you can put together different elements from this book to create a rich jazz vocabulary.

[illegible]


Improvising over Altered Dominants

When improvising over altered dominant chords, you can't simply use the mixolydian mode (the major scale with a lowered seventh). Altered dominant chords use different scales depending on their alterations. All of these scales should be based on the root of the dominant chord. In other words, for a G dominant seventh chord, use a scale starting on G.

1. For dominant seventh chords with an altered ninth (lowered, raised, or both), use the half-whole octatonic scale. The **half-whole octatonic scale** is an eight-note scale alternating half steps and whole steps, starting with a half step. The octatonic scale is sometimes referred to as the **diminished scale** or **half-whole diminished scale**. Specific chord symbols have been invented for the examples below, but these scales could go with any dominant seventh chord with an altered ninth.


G Half-Whole Octatonic Scale

G⁷(b⁹)




F Half-Whole Octatonic Scale

F⁷(#⁹)



B^b Half-Whole Octatonic Scale

B^b7(b⁹)



Notice that the half-whole octatonic scale includes the root, the flat nine, the sharp nine, the major third, and the dominant seventh, all of the most important notes for improvising over a dominant seventh chord with an altered ninth.

2. For dominant seventh chords with an altered fifth (lowered, raised, or both), use the whole tone scale. The **whole tone scale** is a hexatonic (six-note) scale consisting of all whole steps. Specific chords have been invented for the examples below, but these scales could go with any dominant seventh chord with an altered fifth.

The image shows three musical staves, each representing a whole tone scale. The first staff is for the G Whole Tone Scale, starting on G4 and ascending by whole tones to E5. The second staff is for the F Whole Tone Scale, starting on F4 and ascending by whole tones to D5. The third staff is for the Bb Whole Tone Scale, starting on Bb3 and ascending by whole tones to G4. Each staff is labeled with its respective scale name and a box containing the scale's formula: G7(#5), F7(b5), and Bb7(#5/b5).

3. For dominant seventh chords with a sharp eleven, use the lydian dominant scale. The **lydian dominant scale** is a major scale with the fourth note raised and the seventh note lowered. It is sometimes called the **lydian mixolydian scale**.

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| G Lydian Dominant Scale | F Lydian Dominant Scale | B ^b Lydian Dominant Scale |
| G7(#11) | F7(#11) | B ^b 7(#11) |

4. For dominant seventh chords with a flat thirteen, use the mixolydian flat six scale. The **mixolydian flat six scale** is a major scale with the sixth and seventh notes lowered.

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| G Mixolydian Flat Six Scale | F Mixolydian Flat Six Scale | B ^b Mixolydian Flat Six Scale |
| G7(b13) | F7(b13) | B ^b 7(b13) |

5. For a chord with an altered ninth (raised, lowered, or both) plus another altered note, use the altered scale. You learned the **altered scale** in the last unit. The altered scale is the seventh mode of the melodic minor scale. Specific chords have been invented for the examples below, but these scales could go with any dominant seventh chord with an altered ninth and one other altered tone or any dominant chord with an “alt” chord symbol.

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| G Altered Scale | F Altered Scale | B ^b Altered Scale |
| G7(b9#13) | F7(#9#5) | B ^b 7alt. |

Use the chart below to review the scales from this unit:

| ALTERED TONE(S) | SCALE | HOW TO FORM |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| The ninth (raised/lowered/both) | Half-whole octatonic scale | Alternate half and whole steps starting with a half step |
| The fifth (raised/lowered/both) | Whole tone scale | Use exclusively wholesteps starting from the root |
| Sharp eleven | Lydian dominant | Start with a major scale, raise the fourth and lower the seventh scale degrees |
| Flat thirteen | Mixolydian flat six | Start with a major scale, lower the sixth and seventh scale degrees |
| The ninth plus one other altered tone | Altered scale | Play the melodic minor scale based on the note a half-step above the root |

Practice writing the correct scales for the altered dominant chords listed below and then write an appropriate chord symbol for the scales given. There will likely be a few different possibilities for appropriate chord symbols.

F7(b9) D7(b13) C7(#9) Bb7(#5)

5 Eb7(#11) E7(b9) A7(#5) B7(b13)

9 Bb7(b5) F#7(#9) Ab7(b13) D7(#11)

13 C7(b9) Db7(b5) Eb7alt. E7(b13)

17

21

25

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *I am used to seven-note scales that have one note for each pitch. How do I know which pitch to give two notes for the octatonic scale and which pitch to leave out for the whole tone scale?*

A: Good news – it doesn't really matter which pitches you include or exclude when writing scales that aren't seven notes. Write them in whatever way is easiest.

Q: *When a chord has an alteration, why can't I just take the mixolydian scale and alter that note? For a flat nine chord, can't I just take the regular mixolydian mode and lower the second scale degree?*

A: Not quite. Simple alterations work to create some scales, like the lydian dominant and mixolydian flat six. For other scales, altering just a single note creates undesirable intervals between the surrounding notes. While the scales match the chords, they won't be very useful in terms of making melodies.

Q: *There are way too many scales! How am I supposed to remember all of these?*

A: I hear you! I know that this last chapter is a bit of a “scale dump.” There is no denying that it will take repetitive practice to remember these scales and their relationships with chords. But here's a little good news – the half-whole octatonic and the whole tone scale are **symmetrical scales**, meaning that they are built on repetitive interval patterns. Being a symmetrical scale means that the same set of notes is used for many different scales. For example, look at the whole tone scales for G, A, B, C#, D#/Eb, and F below:

The image displays six whole tone scales written on musical staves. Each scale is labeled in a box above it: "G Whole Tone Scale", "A Whole Tone Scale", "B Whole Tone Scale", "C# Whole Tone Scale", "D# Whole Tone Scale", and "F Whole Tone Scale". The scales are written in 4/4 time, starting on the first line (F4) and ending on the second line (F5). The notes for each scale are: G (G, A, B, C#, D, E, F), A (A, B, C, D, E, F, G), B (B, C, D, E, F, G, A), C# (C#, D, E, F, G, A, B), D# (D#, E, F, G, A, B, C), and F (F, G, A, B, C, D, E). The scales are arranged in two rows of three.

Notice anything? The scales all consist of the same set of pitches, just starting in different places. The whole tone scale repeats every whole step and there are only two different sets of pitches that make up all the whole tone scales. Similarly, the half-whole octatonic scale repeats every three half steps (every minor third). There are only three different sets of pitches that make up all half-whole octatonic scales.

Q: *Okay, I understand that there is a half-whole octatonic scale. Does that mean there's a whole-half octatonic scale as well?*

A: I was going to wait to introduce that one, but since you asked, I will tell you about it. The **whole-half octatonic scale** alternates half steps and whole steps starting with a whole step. It forms a very different scale! Musicians use this scale for fully diminished seventh chords.

Q: *You mentioned earlier that the altered scale is sometimes called the “diminished-whole tone.” Why is that?*

A: You have the tools to understand this now! The first four notes of the altered scale are the same as the first four of the half-whole octatonic scale, also known as the diminished scale. The last four notes of the altered scale are the same as the last four notes of the whole tone scale.

Q: *Do the right hand and left hand need to match?*

A: Now you have me excited! Usually, pianists prefer to create a match between their right hand and left hand. However, there are certain musicians who consciously create contrasts between their two hands, mismatching chords and scales to create layers of color with a little dissonance or funkiness. I would first aim to match between the two hands, but later experiment with creating contrasts between the two hands and see if you like what you hear.

Practicing Improvising Over Altered Dominants

You should practice improvising using these new scales in the following four ways. Practice playing one scale at a time through the whole process to gain mastery and control before moving on to the next sound.

1. Hold down the bass note in your left hand and practice exploring your chosen scale in your right hand.

Don't worry about tempo or style. Simply investigate every part of the scale like you are looking into every nook and cranny of a room you have just discovered. Set a timer for five or ten minutes and just sit and work with the scale.

2. Practice playing the scales for a ii-V-I progression while comping the chords.

Notice that the whole tone scale and the octatonic scale don't have the normal number of notes, so you will have to adjust the exercise accordingly. The voicings start either with Type A or Type B depending on which leaves the most room for the scales. The top note has been removed from some of these voicings to accommodate the right hand.

ii-V-I in C with Octatonic Scale

ii-V-I in F with Octatonic Scale

ii-V-I in Bb with Octatonic Scale

3. Improvise over the ii-V-I progression using the altered dominant you are practicing.

Improvise using the dorian mode for the ii chord, your altered dominant scale for the V chord, and the major scale for the I chord. You might want to write the scale out so that you can see the notes in front of you as you improvise.

4. Practice improvising using the scale over a tune.

Choose a tune from *The Real Book* with some dominant chords and prepare to improvise on the dominant chords by writing out the scales and practicing them up and down a few times, if needed. Then, improvise using your chosen scale on every dominant chord in the tune until it becomes second nature.

Go through the scales one by one. It might feel overwhelming, but it doesn't all have to be done at once. Each scale you tackle will be easier and easier to learn.

Other Common Chord Progressions

So far, the curriculum of this book has been downright obsessed with the ii-V-I progression, and with good reason! The ii-V-I progression is absolutely key to the jazz style. However, as you complete this book, there are other progressions you should be aware of that will help you to read through lead sheets before beginning Book 2 of the series.

1. The **I-vi-ii-V (“one-six-two-five”) progression** is incredibly common in jazz standards and pop music. It moves from a major tonic chord to a minor chord based on the sixth scale degree, then to a minor chord based on the second scale degree, and finally to the dominant chord based on the fifth scale degree. The I-vi-ii-V progression is at the heart of well-known songs such as Hoagy Carmichael’s “Heart and Soul,” George Gershwin’s “I’ve Got Rhythm,” Rodgers and Hart’s “Blue Moon,” and Leonard Cohen’s “Hallelujah.” It is also commonly used for introductions and endings because it can be repeated as an endless loop.

I-vi-ii-V in C Major **I-vi-ii-V in F Major**

Chord progressions shown:

- I-vi-ii-V in C Major:** Cmaj7 (Type A), Am7 (Type B), Dm7 (Type A), G7 (Type B).
- I-vi-ii-V in F Major:** Fmaj7 (Type B), Dm7 (Type A), Gm7 (Type B), C7 (Type A).

2. A variation of the I-vi-ii-V progression is the **iii-vi-ii-V (“three-six-two-five”) progression**, in which a minor chord based on the third scale degree substitutes for the tonic. Because the music never settles on the tonic chord, the iii-vi-ii-V feels even more cyclical and unstable. This progression can be played with a minor iii chord or with a dominant iii chord.

Notice that for the iii chord, the root replaces the ninth in the voicing. The ninth of a iii chord is traditionally avoided because it is outside of the overall diatonic key. For instance, the ninth of E minor seventh is F-sharp which is outside of the key of C major. Although the ninth is sometimes played, it tends to stick out from the progression. When a dominant chord is used as the iii, a flat nine is chosen to fit with the diatonic scale.

iii-vi-ii-V in C Major **iii-vi-ii-V in F Major**

Chord progressions shown:

- iii-vi-ii-V in C Major:** Em7 (Type A), Am7 (Type B), Dm7 (Type A), G7 (Type B).
- iii-vi-ii-V in F Major:** Am7 (Type B), Dm7 (Type A), Gm7 (Type B), C7 (Type A).

3. The **diminished walk-up** and the **diminished walk-down** are progressions that alternate between diatonic and diminished chords. They are found in jazz standards like “Ain’t Misbehavin’,” “Have You Met Miss Jones,” “Someday My Prince Will Come,” and “Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars (Corcovado).”

Remember that voicings for diminished chords work just like voicings for other chords except that the root replaces the ninth. To voice a diminished chord, play the third and seventh (which looks like the sixth) in the left hand, as you would with any other type of chord. Then, place the flatted fifth and the root in the right hand. In the example, the diminished walk-down ends with a ii-V-I to lend the progression a pleasant resolution.

Diminished Walk-Up in C

Cmaj7 C#°7 Dm7 D#°7 Em7 F°7 Fmaj7

Type A Type A Type A Type A Type A Type A Type A

Diminished Walk-Up in F

Fmaj7 F#°7 Gm7 G#°7 Am7 Bb°7 Bbmaj7

Type B Type B Type B Type B Type B Type B Type B

Diminished Walk-Down in C

Fmaj7 F°7 Em7 Eb°7 Dm7 G7 Cmaj7

Type A Type A Type A Type A Type A Type B Type A

Diminished Walk-Down in F

Bbmaj7 Bb°7 Am7 Ab°7 Gm7 C7 Fmaj7

Type B Type B Type B Type B Type B Type A Type B

4. The **backdoor ii-V-I** (“**backdoor two-five-one**”) begins like a ii-V-I progression but resolves to a tonic chord a whole step up from the V chord. Looked at another way, the progression uses a minor seventh chord based on the fourth scale degree and a dominant seventh chord based on the lowered seventh scale degree to resolve up to a tonic chord. The backdoor ii-V-I progression is found commonly in the jazz repertoire, including in pieces like “Just Friends,” “I Should Care,” “Misty,” and “Stella by Starlight.”

Backdoor ii-V-I in C Major

Type A Type B Type B

Backdoor ii-V-I in F Major

Type B Type A Type A

The backdoor ii-V-I often uses a dominant chord with a sharp eleven. The following voicings show how you could incorporate a sharp eleven and a natural thirteen to create a full-sounding voicing.

Backdoor ii-V-I in C Major

Type A Type B Type B

Backdoor ii-V-I in F Major

Type B Type A Type A

Practice these progressions in all keys and watch for them in jazz standards as you read through *The Real Book*.

Other Common Chords

You will likely see a few chords in *The Real Book* that haven't been covered extensively in this book. Below, you'll find a summary of these chords and how to play them.

1. Suspended chords

In **suspended chords**, also known as **sus chords** or **sus4 chords**, the fourth scale degree replaces the third. Although the chord derives from the classical idea of a suspension, in which the tension created by the fourth resolves to the third, suspended chords don't always resolve in jazz. Unless the chord symbol specifically designates a major seventh, as in the final measure of this example, use a dominant seventh for a sus chord.

The image shows four measures of music in 4/4 time, each containing a suspended chord. The first measure is C7(sus4) with notes C, E, F, and G. The second measure is A7(sus4) with notes A, C, D, and E. The third measure is F7(sus4) with notes F, A, B, and C. The fourth measure is Ebmaj7(sus4) with notes Eb, G, Ab, and Bb. Below each measure is a label: 'Type A' for the first two and 'Type B' for the last two.

C7(sus4) A7(sus4) F7(sus4) Ebmaj7(sus4)

Type A Type A Type B Type B

2. Major sixth and minor sixth chords

In **major sixth** and **minor sixth chords**, the sixth scale degree of the major scale replaces the seventh. Sixth chords are frequently used in place of major seventh chords when the root of the chord is in the melody. Because the root is a half step away from the major seventh, the two notes clash. A sixth chord provides a much more consonant solution. Note that even for minor sixth chords, the sixth degree of the major scale is used.

The image shows four measures of music in 4/4 time, each containing a sixth chord. The first measure is C6 with notes C, E, F, and G. The second measure is Am6 with notes A, C, D, and F. The third measure is F6 with notes F, A, B, and C. The fourth measure is Ebm6 with notes Eb, G, Ab, and Bb. Below each measure is a label: 'Type A' for the first two and 'Type B' for the last two.

C⁶ Am⁶ F⁶ Ebm⁶

Type A Type A Type B Type B

3. Inversions

Remember from the beginning of the book that inversions are notated using a slash between the chord and the bass note. It is appropriate to add the root next to the ninth of the voicing when you see an inversion since the bass player is no longer playing the root.

Cmaj7/E Am7/E F7/Eb Dm6/B

Type A Type A Type B Type B

4. Slash chords

A **slash chord** is a chord with a bass note that is not part of the original chord. Instead of an inversion, a slash chord is a mismatched pair of a chord and bass. For slash chords, you can also add the root next to the ninth in your voicing.

Cmaj7/F Am7/D F7/B Dm6/G

Type A Type A Type B Type B

5. Triads

Remember that when chord symbols don't have an odd number at the end, they usually indicate a triad. When voicing a triad, it is usually acceptable to play the ninth as a color note. Voice the root and fifth in your left hand and the ninth and third in the right hand or voice the root and third in your left hand and the ninth and fifth in your right.

C Am F Dm

FAQ

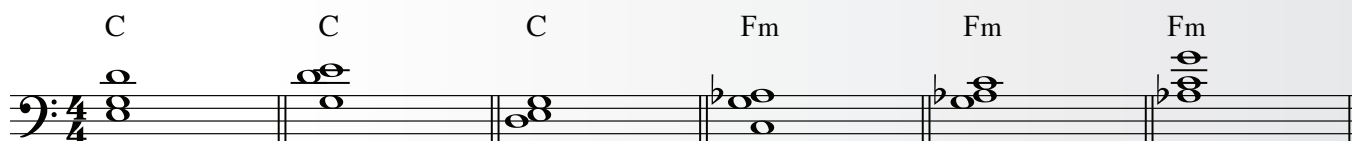
Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *What about for one-handed voicings? Should I add the root into the left-handed voicing for inversions and slash chords?*

A: Yes! You can add the root next to the seventh for one-handed voicings.

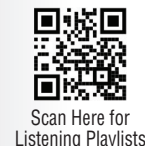
Q: *How should I voice triads for one-handed voicings?*

A: Use a combination of the third, fifth, and ninth for one-handed voicings. Any order of these three notes will sound good. See the example below.



GUIDED LISTENING 12—

“Cheek to Cheek” by Ahmad Jamal



“Cheek to Cheek,” composed by Irving Berlin, is the sixth track from the 1958 album *Ahmad’s Blues*.

Ahmad Jamal (1930-) is a jazz pianist known for his sparkling technique, radical use of space, embrace of dynamic extremes, and creative trio arrangements. Miles Davis cited Jamal as being among his biggest influences, in particular with regards to using silence with intention. Jamal’s great trio, heard here, expertly mixed traditional jazz forms with vamps, cued sections, and intricate grooves.

PERSONNEL

Ahmad Jamal, piano

Israel Crosby, bass

Vernel Fournier, drums

Form

- 0:00-1:19 Head In (AABCA Form)
- 1:19-2:05 ii-V-iii-vi Vamp
- 2:05-2:30 Bass Ascends Chromatically
- 2:30-2:42 Vamp on G
- 2:42-4:09 Piano Solo on Form
- 4:09-end ii-V-iii-vi Vamp 2 and Ending

If you have never heard “Cheek to Cheek” before, listen to a couple of vocal recordings before listening to Jamal’s deconstructive version (try the original Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers recording or the Ella Fitzgerald rendition). Although “Cheek to Cheek” is a very traditional sounding song from a 1935 movie, it is an odd song with an unusual form. The two sixteen-measure A sections are followed by two sixteen-measure B sections, an eight-measure contrasting C section, and then finally one more A section.

The piece starts with two I-vi-ii-V progressions. Listen to Israel Crosby’s bassline and see if you can hear the progression. Because the piece is in the key of C major, the bass is moving from C to A to D to G. Notice that Jamal plays the beginning of the melody but stops midway through and allows the listener to finish the melody in their head. In the second A section (0:19), Jamal and Crosby repeat a variation of the I-vi-ii-V progression, replacing the A and G chords with their tritone substitutions, for a new bassline of C-E-flat-D-D-flat. The bridge (0:38) starts with ii-V-I progressions in C. Listen for D-G-C in the bass. Notice that Jamal doesn’t comp at all beneath the bridge melody and again stops playing the melody about halfway through. The last A section (1:07) returns to the I-vi-ii-V progression.

Starting at 1:19, the trio plays a lengthy extension of the ending, repeating a iii-vi-ii-V progression. The way they play it, the ii receives the rhythmic emphasis, so it sounds like a **ii-V-iii-vi (“two-five-three-six”) progression**. Listen for the bass moving from D to G to E to A as Jamal trades phrases with the drums. The trio then launches into a passage where the bass ascends chromatically through all twelve keys (2:05-2:30) before settling on G, the dominant of the original key of C major. Finally, at 2:42, Jamal starts improvising on the actual chord changes of “Cheek to Cheek.”

Notice that Jamal’s improvisation is in the upper register and repetitive to a fault, sometimes apparently becoming “stuck” on a single phrase or motive, as is evident from 3:23 to 3:39. After improvising for a full chorus, the band again plays their ii-V-iii-vi extension starting at 4:09 and Jamal again returns to exchanging phrases with drummer Fournier.

Take the time to appreciate the trio’s playfulness, lightness, and the intentionality of every note and phrase. Ahmad Jamal’s music is so singular that it is almost its own genre of jazz. Even though no pianist has been able to imitate him fully, his style has had far-reaching effects on all kinds of jazz artists.

UNIT 12 ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Improvisation Exercise 12 – altered scale improv**
2. **Practice ii-V-I Lick 10 in all twelve keys and apply to tunes**
3. **Practice improvising using the half-whole octatonic scale, the whole tone scale, the altered scale, the lydian dominant scale, and the mixolydian flat six scale, one at a time**
 - a. Explore the sound and notes of each scale while holding the bass note in your left hand
 - b. Practice playing the scale while comping the chords in a ii-V-I
 - c. Improvise using each scale in the context of a ii-V-I
 - d. Choose a tune from *The Real Book* and practice using the scale every time you get to a dominant chord in the tune
4. **Practice the I-vi-ii-V, the iii-vi-ii-V, the diminished walk-up/walk-down, and the backdoor ii-V-I in all twelve keys**
5. **Look through *The Real Book* for suspended chords, major/minor sixth chords, inversions, and slash chords and practice finding voicings for the chords as they come up**
6. **Guided Listening 12: “Cheek to Cheek” by Ahmad Jamal**
 - a. Listen to “Cheek to Cheek” at least twenty times
 - b. Pay attention to the chord progressions introduced in this unit
 - c. Listen for Jamal’s use of space
 - d. Track the unusual form of “Cheek to Cheek”

WHAT NOW?

Before you move on to your next stage of study, choose ten tunes from the Tune Bank. For each tune:

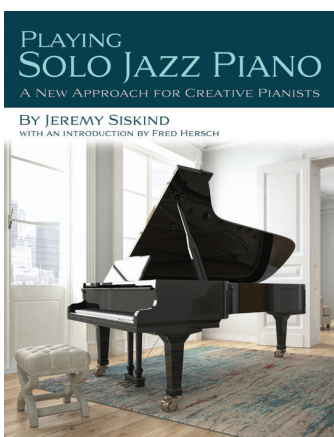
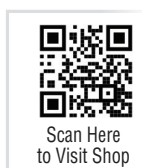
1. Find and master two-handed Type A/B voicings. Alter all dominant chords. Using a play-along, practice comping in rhythm using comping patterns and variations.
2. Find and master one-handed Type A/B voicings. Alter all dominant chords. Using a play-along, practice comping and playing the melody with one-handed Type A/B voicings. Personalize the melody using grace notes, ghost notes, turns, and rhythmic changes.
3. Practice playing a bassline in two in the left hand while comping with one-handed Type A/B voicings in the right hand.
4. Practice improvising over the chord changes, utilizing:
 - a. Scales, including scales for altered dominant chords. Practice incorporating the blues scale in addition to your major scales and modes.
 - b. Arpeggios, particularly 3-5-7-9 arpeggios with smooth voice leading as introduced in Unit 8
 - c. All of the ii-V-I licks (yes, go back and review all 10 licks!)
 - d. Your favorite concepts from your improvisation exercises, including:
 - Building rhythmic vocabulary
 - Play Two, Rest Two/Play One, Rest One
 - Play what you sing
 - Using neighbor tones
 - Using grace notes
5. Choose two of the pieces from *The Real Book*. Write and practice:
 - a. A dream solo
 - b. A scripted solo

Mastery is a process rather than a destination. That said, the more you work these muscles, the more your positive practices will become habitual.

WHAT'S NEXT?

In the second book of this series, you will learn about transcribing, solo piano basics, minor harmony, other voicing types, introductions/endings, more comping patterns, scale patterns, other common jazz forms, and improvisation games. Once the book is in print (2022), it will be available at

www.jeremysiskind.com/shop/
which you can visit by scanning this QR code:



If you enjoyed this book and want to go “all in” on solo jazz piano, consider purchasing *Playing Solo Jazz Piano* by Jeremy Siskind, also available at **www.jeremysiskind.com/shop/**, which you can visit by scanning the QR code above.

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